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Microbe detector uses scattered laser light

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

A fast, cost-effective way of detecting bacteria has been developed by US researchers.

Food processors could benefit from the new technology, which detects the distinctive ways in which colonies of bacteria scatter laser light, according to New Scientist.

The laser scatterometer, the result of research at Purdue University in Indiana, is capable of detecting and identifying bacterial colonies within hours.

This represents a vast improvement over current methods, which require samples to be grown for up to two days before biochemical tests can be run.

The researchers found that, when hit with a laser beam, the complex bacterial colony structures scatter the light into a unique pattern which can then be analysed mathematically.

Publishing their progress in the Journal of Biomedical Optics, the team said that they have so far managed to identify six different species of Listeria, a bacterium which is commonly found in food.

As well as operating to a high degree of accuracy, the technology would also be cost-effective for food producers, with the entire hardware costing less than US\$1,000, New Scientist reports.

[Further information](http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn9643-scattered-laser-light-gives-bacteria-away.html)

Ethical ingredients for popular ice cream brand

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

Ben & Jerry's is launching the UK's first Fairtrade ice cream, which will be available in stores in August.

The company believes that its new Fairtrade vanilla ice cream will be the first Fairtrade product in its category in Europe.

The ice cream is made using ingredients which ensure a fair deal for their producers, including the Indian farmers who grow the vanilla beans and sugar cane growers from Paraguay.

Recent figures from the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) revealed that global sales of certified products increased by 37 per cent between 2004 and 2005.

Ben & Jerry's said that Fairtrade is about "making sure people get their fair share of the pie".

"The whole concept of fair trade goes to the heart of our values and the sense of right and wrong.

"Nobody wants to buy something that was made by exploiting somebody else."

According to the company's website, the new vanilla ice cream marks the beginning of "a long-term commitment to introduce Fairtrade ingredients across our entire range of flavours".

Fairtrade Vanilla will soon be available in both 150ml and 550ml tubs from Sainsbury's and Co-op stores.

[Further information](http://www.benjerry.co.uk/fairtrade)

Vegetable-hating kids may have sensitive taste buds

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

Young children who are particularly sensitive to bitter flavours are also more likely to dislike vegetables, according to research.

Published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the study found that preschoolers who have innately sensitive taste buds are less likely to eat vegetables.

When children were given water containing a very small amount of a bitter-tasting compound, 37 per cent claimed that the water tasted bad, while the others were unable to detect the compound.

Those children who were more sensitive to bitterness also ate significantly fewer bitter vegetables than the other children when provided with a range of vegetables to snack on.

In particular, they avoided bitter vegetables such as broccoli and olives, but many also avoided sweeter types, including carrots and red peppers.

The researchers insist that parents should realise that their children might not have the same taste experience as themselves.

"Parents should try not to project their own food preferences onto their children," said Dr Beverly Tepper, professor of food science at Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

[Further information](http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060727/hl_nm/tots_veggies_dc)

Organic box from Sainsbury's is UK first

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

Sainsbury's has unveiled plans to launch an organic box which will be available online for home delivery.

The supermarket plans to trial its SO organic box in the East Midlands and Anglia before rolling the service out throughout the country.

Certified by the Soil Association, the boxes will be a UK supermarket first and will contain eight varieties of organic fresh produce, the exact types of vegetable being dependent on the season.

Russell Crowe, Sainsbury's organic produce buyer, commented: "This is a huge push for the UK

organic industry and supports Sainsbury's ongoing commitment to British farmers and producers.

"It's fantastic that we are able to draw together the best of British produce in season by using our national network of growers," he added.

The majority of the produce will be obtained locally, however the service may have to source some items from elsewhere around the nation, although none will be imported from outside the UK.

Details of the individual produce items' origins will feature on each box, including farm name and region.

The packaging itself will be 100 per cent recycled and recyclable and any internal packaging will be GM free, 100 per cent compostable and biodegradable.

[Further information](http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/index.asp?PageID=424&Year=2006&NewsID=729)

Perfect boiled egg on the horizon

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

British Lion Eggs will soon provide consumers with an easy way to obtain the perfect boiled egg.

Producers of eggs bearing the Lion Quality mark, which confirms that the eggs have been produced to the highest standards of food safety in the world, set scientists the task of coming up with a self-timing egg, so that consumers can be assured of a perfect boiled egg every time.

As a result, consumers will soon be able to prepare a soft, medium or hard boiled egg without having to worry about timers or whether to add the egg before or after the water has boiled.

Researchers have used the latest heat sensitive technology to create a special label on the egg shell.

As soon as the egg has been cooked sufficiently, a Lion logo appears on the egg, indicating that it is ready to remove from the water.

Gilly Beaumont, a spokeswoman for B&H Colour Change, revealed: "We are still perfecting the technology, but we are very excited at the prospect of solving a problem that has wound people up at breakfast time for decades."

[Further information](http://www.eggrecipes.co.uk/eggnews/asp/news.asp)

Sweet sherry gets orange twist

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 06

Story Text

Fans of Harveys Bristol Cream will soon be able to enjoy a sweet sherry with a twist.

Beam Wine Estates is about to launch Harveys Orange, a blend of Harveys Bristol Cream with natural orange essence, according to Checkout Magazine.

The company claims that Harveys Bristol Cream tends to be particularly popular when served over ice with a slice of orange, giving them the idea for an orange variant.

They hope that the brand will help to breathe new life into the sector and are targeting females over the age of 35 in particular.

Drew Munro, marketing director at Beam Wine Estates, told Checkout Magazine that the company is aiming to reinvigorate the category by making sherry "exciting and relevant" to both new and existing sherry drinkers.

"As category leader with Harveys Bristol Cream, which represents a third of the total off-trade sales of sherry by both volume and value, we are committed to the long term future of sherry and feel best placed to offer consumers something new and exciting that will re-energise the category overall," he commented.

Harveys Orange will be available from August 7th and is expected to retail at Â£7.19.

Further information

DMV unveils high gelling whey proteins

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

Food ingredients manufacturer DMV International has launched high gelling whey proteins which are designed to be used in yoghurts and other food applications.

Textrion Progel 800 has superb water binding properties which make it suitable for texturing in yoghurts, desserts, processed cheeses, meat and bakery applications.

It has been developed especially for acid and heat-induced gelling and will provide food manufacturers with new opportunities for a wide range of innovative food products.

Floris Stehouwer, of DMV International Latin America, is due to discuss the new whey protein at the Food Ingredients South America Conference Programme, where he will also talk about the functional properties of acid WPC 80.

Unlike other similar products, DMV's acid WPC 80 is high in b-lactoglobulin and is therefore a highly efficient texturiser.

As well as its application in yoghurt, acid WPC 60 is also suitable for use in processed meat and as a replacement for eggs in cake.

Further information

Biodegradable packaging material being trialled in Australia

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

Plantic Technologies, an Australian biodegradable plastic producer, is conducting trials of a biodegradable material designed to be used with plastic bottles.

The material has been developed from Plantic biodegradable resin and acts as a barrier to gas, thereby preventing gas from escaping and lengthening shelf life.

It is designed to be used with polyethylene terephthalate (Pet) bottles, which are commonly used to package beer.

Grant Dow, the company's managing director, told Piranet that the results have so far been very encouraging and that they expect the product to be ready in early 2007.

"The key issues we have to overcome are barrier performance, clarity, processability, value for money, delamination performance and compatibility with existing recycling systems," he added.

Plastic is rapidly becoming the material of choice for beer packaging as it is cost-effective and lighter than glass alternatives.

Plantic is constantly researching innovative new ways to use its products, with technologies including thermoformed trays that dissolve upon contact with water.

The company's technology is currently being used by a range of manufacturers and brand owners, including Cadbury Schweppes and Aldi Supermarkets.

[Further information](http://www.plantic.com.au/index.php?page=Home)

EC tables new legislation on food additives

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

The European Commission has put forward proposals to harmonise legislation on food additives, flavourings and enzymes.

The package of proposals has been drawn up under the guidance of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which wishes to bring the rules for additives and flavourings in line with the latest scientific and technological developments, as well as introducing new regulations for food enzymes.

Markos Kyprianou, commissioner for health and consumer protection, commented: "Food additives, flavourings and enzymes play an important role in the production of food for today's mass market and can offer benefits to the consumer in terms of keeping food fresh and tasty.

"Clearly, harmonised rules on the safety approval and marketing of these substances serve to protect the consumer and boost public confidence in the food produced with them."

Mr Kyprianou added that the new proposals would ensure that the legislation was based on "sound scientific evidence" and that consumers throughout the EU could be assured of a standardised level of safety.

Further information

Frozen organic pizzas and pizza bases debut at Waitrose

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

Waitrose is launching a new range of frozen organic pizzas and pizza bases in celebration of Organic Fortnight in September.

The authentic Italian range uses traditional ingredients and cooking methods to provide as much flavour and texture as possible.

The range will initially include Margherita and Spinach & Mozzarella flavoured pizzas, with the bases made from traditionally fermented, rather than chemically leavened, dough.

The dough is gently rolled and stretched, laden with organic tomato pasatta, fresh Buffalo mozzarella and genuine Italian toppings, and then stone baked.

The supermarket will also be the first to offer a frozen organic pizza base with passata, enabling consumers to add their own toppings and create their own pizza recipes.

Sarah Mayall, frozen foods buyer at Waitrose, commented: "We are committed to offering customers high-quality produce and are very excited to be launching this organic frozen pizza range, not only because the frozen pizza bases are first to market but because it demonstrates that convenience food does not have to compromise on taste or authenticity."

Further information

Ishida to unveil rapid traysealer

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

Ishida Europe is due to unveil its new traysealer, which is capable of sealing up to 200 trays per minute.

The new machine is the fastest twin lane traysealer on the market, according to the company, and is both flexible and hygienic.

Complete with its compact size, fast tooling changeover and low running costs, the QX-1100 traysealer is ideal for producing perfectly-presented packs for supermarket shelves in a short space of time.

An integrated mini packaging line means that it is capable of packing fresh vegetables and ready meals, and its innovative gripper design and advanced software place it firmly at the forefront of the market.

An advanced quality control system also means that the new model is capable of rejecting packs, which are then removed prior to sealing, meaning that film is not wasted unnecessarily.

The machine is due to be unveiled at the Macropak exhibition, which will take place later this year in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

[Further information](http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/ish/ish113.html)

Supermarket removes oils from products

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 06

Story Text

Waitrose has removed hydrogenated vegetable oils (HVOs) from all of its chilled ready meals, the company has said.

The supermarket chain made a statement in response to recent calls from medical experts in the British Medical Journal to eliminate HVOs and trans-fats from foods because of the dangers they pose to health.

Moira Howie, Waitrose nutritionist, commented: "At Waitrose, we consistently aim to provide our customers with a nutritionally-sound choice of quality foods."

Ms Howie said that the supermarket's commitment to clear labeling was evident in its listing of hydrogenated vegetable oil in ingredients panels.

"Our work in the removal of HVOs from our products also means that the need to label trans-fats in a nutritional panel will soon be completely redundant," she revealed.

Waitrose has been working to eliminate HVOs from its products since 2004 and, in addition to its chilled ready meals, the supermarket has also successfully removed the oils from all of its biscuits, all hot and cold pies and quiches, and over two thirds of its bakery and patisserie range.

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

Wine retailers could cash in on Sunday lunch

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

UK consumers still like to gather around the table for a traditional Sunday lunch and many like to spend more than usual on wine for the occasion.

Despite the recent onslaught of contemporary alcoholic beverages, such as alcopops, wine was revealed to be the most popular beverage at the dinner table on Sundays for consumers over the age of 21, according to Checkout Magazine.

The survey, which was conducted by the famous wine brand, Mouton Cadet, also revealed that 71 per cent of UK respondents spend over $\pounds 4$ on wine to drink with their Sunday lunch, while a quarter of Londoners usually pay more than $\pounds 6$.

The wine brand claims that retailers and marketers could use Sunday lunch as "an ideal occasion" to promote their more expensive wines, as consumers are clearly prepared to splash out a little for higher quality wines on Sundays.

In addition, the survey found that French wine is still most popular at Sunday lunch, despite the recent trend for new world wines, such as those from New Zealand and Australia.

[Further information](http://www.checkoutmagazine.co.uk/market_update/market_update_story.ehtml?o=2096)

High quality thermoformed packing from Ulma

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

Ulma Packaging's thermoformer is attracting significant interest across Europe, according to the company, and is likely to prove popular in the UK.

The TF Supra Skin thermoformer is designed to produce high quality packs of cooked and uncooked meats, fish and cheese on a medium production level.

Derek Paterson, Ulma's UK director, commented: "There has been incredible interest in the TF Supra Skin because people can see, for the first time, a real alternative for this type of packaging machine – a sensibly-priced option that performs well and which can run equally well with a number of varied film types."

Mr Paterson said that the machine has proven its worth over the 18 months since its initial introduction in Spain.

"That gives us a distinct advantage in the UK market as skin packs are set to really develop here," he added.

The system is available with optional vacuum and gas flushing systems for modified atmosphere packaging (Map) and helps to increase energy efficiency and reduce costs, as its infrared top web heating system enables it to start quickly from cold.

[Further information](http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/ulm/ulm116.html)

FSA considering noni juice drink

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

Noni juice is currently under consideration by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), whose advisory committee is currently seeking comments on its draft opinion of a product containing the fruit juice.

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP), an independent body of scientific experts that advises the FSA, has recommended that the juice should be allowed to go on sale in the EU, as it is "substantially equivalent" to a previously approved product.

The juice, which comes from the noni fruit, is believed to have originated in south-east Asia and is also found in the Pacific Islands, India, Africa and the West Indies.

It has been consumed overseas for hundreds of years, primarily for medicinal purposes, although

no health claims have ever been backed by solid scientific research.

Leap of Faith Farms hopes to market its noni juice, which is produced from fruit grown in Panama.

If approved, the juice would be available to UK retailers as pure fresh juice, fresh juice with three to 15 per cent other fruit juices, concentrated, frozen juice and dried fresh juice.

The company claims that its products are substantially equivalent to Tahitian Noni Juice, which was approved as a Novel Food in 2003 in the EU.

[Further information](http://www.acnfp.gov.uk/assess/simproc/noniloff)

Farmer-owned firm creates new stilton blends

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

A new innovation centre has enabled a cheese-maker to develop new varieties of cheese which have helped to secure important supermarket deals.

Melton Mowbray-based Long Clawson has been able to trial new blended cheese varieties of its White Stilton cheese, with one of the more successful blends, White Stilton with champagne and rhubarb, being selected for the Tesco's Finest range, according to Farmers Weekly.

The company now hopes to produce more varieties of blended cheese to help develop additional markets for its products.

A spokesman for Long Clawson told Farmers Weekly: "This will make the company less dependent on the traditional Blue Stilton market which has historically seen 35 per cent of the company's trade done in the last six weeks of the year for the Christmas market."

The company has recently upgraded its facilities as part of a £7 million expansion programme.

It currently makes around 4,500 tonnes of cheese per year, using a total of 48 million litres of milk.

[Further information](http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2006/07/27/96635/Stilton+blends+a+hit+with+supermarkets.htm)

[Further information](http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2006/07/27/96635/Stilton+blends+a+hit+with+supermarkets.htm)

Pirate flavours for limited edition crisps

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

Hula Hoops are following a pirate theme for their latest limited edition multi-pack, which has been inspired by the recent Pirates of the Caribbean movie release.

Brand owner United Biscuits is launching a pirate-themed range next month, which includes limited edition flavours and the chance to win £5,000 "in gold", according to website mad.co.uk.

Philip Pick, Hula Hoops group brand manager, told the website: "Following the successful re-launch of Hula Hoops last year, we are using limited editions to keep building the brand by keeping it fresh, exciting and challenging."

The multi-packs will contain Smugglers Smokey Bacon and Caribbean Prawn varieties, with branding created by promotional marketing agency Catalyst.

Catalyst's business director, Sam Jordan, told mad.co.uk: "Pirates fascinate young and old alike, so there is enormous appeal in associating Hula Hoops with the colourful adventurers of the high seas and their quest to find hidden treasure."

Further information

First healthy cola debuts in UK

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 06

Story Text

Cricket Cola, described by its manufacturer as the first healthy cola alternative, has launched in the UK this month.

London-based Pizzino has secured a listing for Cricket Cola and the beverage will be sold in all UK and Irish Harvey Nichols Food markets at Â£1.95 per bottle.

According to the department store, the cola makes "a refreshing alternative to those caffeine, sugar and additive packed cans".

Free from artificial flavourings, the beverage is made from kola nuts and pure cane sugar and is brewed with green tea, a rich source of antioxidants.

A healthy alternative to regular colas, Cricket Cola is believed by some doctors to help reduce the risk of heart disease, cut blood pressure levels and aid in weight loss.

The company hopes that the beverage, which is also available in diet format, will be available in major supermarket chains later this year.

Further information

Animals fed on biotech crops declared safe to eat

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

Food products which have been obtained from animals fed on biotechnology-derived crops are perfectly safe for human consumption, according to a new report.

The paper, released by the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (Cast), claims that meat, milk and eggs from animals fed on crops that were produced using modern biotechnology are as safe as those from animals fed on conventional crops.

Dr John Bonner, executive vice president of Cast, commented: "Results of the most up-to-date

research compiled by this international task force conclude that meat, milk and eggs produced by farm animals fed biotechnology-derived crops are as wholesome, safe and nutritious as similar products produced by animals fed conventional crops."

Task force chair Professor Richard Phipps of the University of Reading said that the safety of high-quality food across the world is "critical".

"During the last decade, the area of biotechnology-derived crops has increased dramatically from four to 90 million hectares/year, and crop varieties of corn, soybean, cotton and canola are now widely used and are an important feedstuff in livestock production systems," he revealed.

Professor Phipps added that consideration of the safety of meat, milk and eggs obtained from animals fed on such crops was therefore "essential".

[Further information](http://www.cast-science.org/cast/news/feedsafety_nr.htm)

Sweeteners industry 'set to surge'

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

The sweeteners industry is likely to enjoy a surge in sales volume in response to consumer preferences shifting towards low calorie foods and beverages, according to business consultants, Frost & Sullivan.

A growing number of food manufacturers are incorporating sweeteners into their products and, with consumers perceiving sweetener-enhanced products to be safer than high-sugar foods, the market is heading for rapid and imminent growth.

Research analyst Kaye Cheung commented: "Not only can [manufacturers] provide sugar-free products, but also the amount of sweetener needed to replace the same amount of natural sugar will be significantly reduced, allowing for decreased material handling.

"Furthermore, sugar-free foods sweetened with sugar substitutes have greatly increased the availability of products for today's growing population of diabetic consumers," Ms Cheung added.

The fact that consumers are now increasingly able to benefit from healthier products which do not compromise on taste should help to slow the rise in obesity and diabetes.

[Further information](http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=176019)

Food manufacturers urged to cut packaging

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

Food and drink manufacturers and retailers could do more to reduce the amount of packaging waste produced in the UK, according to the Environment Agency.

The agency has published its annual Spotlight report, in which it highlights the environmental

performance of businesses in England and Wales over the previous year.

"If you opened up an ordinary household bin bag, you would find that most of its contents would include packaging and products from some of the biggest names in the world of food and drink," said Paul Leinster, acting chief executive at the Environment Agency.

"That's why we are asking the food and drink industry to look at the amount of packaging and waste they create because they are key to how much rubbish we all produce every day."

The report commended Sainsbury's for reducing its own-label Easter egg packaging by 40 per cent compared to 2004, while Coca-Cola was highlighted for its investment in recycling infrastructure and equipment.

Mr Leinster insisted that environmental performance can help companies financially and said that the food and drink sector had recently made "significant progress".

"But the way our society uses resources cannot continue, so we want to see even more progress," he added.

[Further information](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news/1438317)

First commercially-grown English apricots now available

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

The first apricots to be grown commercially in England have gone on sale in Sainsbury's this week.

The supermarket has started to offer the home-grown soft fruit, which are grown in Kent, under its premium Taste the Difference range.

Until now, the only apricots to be grown in the UK have been on a small scale, in cottage gardens against warmer, south-facing garden walls.

However, the supermarket has revealed that the traditional hurdles associated with apricot production in the UK have been overcome with the help of technology and new plant varieties.

Apricots flower in February, when few British insects are present to pollinate the trees. However, new self-fertilising varieties of the trees have made them a viable crop in the warmer, southern regions of the UK.

Sainsbury's product technologist, Theresa Huxley, revealed: "Our fruit growers are using new growing technology and finely honed expertise to turn Kent into the English Mediterranean."

Ms Huxley said that the apricots taste every bit as good as imported fruits, if not better.

"In addition, because the fruit remains on the tree for longer, many experts argue that they have a sweeter, more delicate flavour than imported fruit."

The English apricots are said to have an "exceptional aromatic taste, mixed with good acid balance which matures after picking to develop rich succulent apricot flavours".

[Further information](http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/index.asp?PageID=424&Year=2006&NewsID=726)

Spain introduces mini seedless watermelon

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

A new breed of miniature watermelon has recently hit the market which should help to boost the attractiveness of the fruit.

Seedless watermelons are growing in popularity, according to Freshinfo, and are proving a hit with consumers.

The new variety, Solinda, is the result of a partnership between Anecoop in Spain, Peviani in Italy and Syngenta Seeds and is an extra sweet, seedless watermelon that is small enough to be consumed by one person.

According to Syngenta, the fruit is "unique in size, taste and convenience and has been bred to offer the advantages of a personal size watermelon".

Richard Jorro, a spokesman for melon supplier Redbridge Woodfresh, told Freshinfo: "The main challenge for Spanish melons in the UK is to continue increasing consumer awareness of the taste of various varieties available, such as Piel de Sapo, the most widely consumed melon in Spain, other than the traditional varieties like yellow Honeydew, which has been associated with the UK for years."

[Further information](http://www.syngenta.co.uk/products-and-activities/mini-watermelon.asp)

Humber seafood institute gets green light

Date: Wed, 26 Jul 06

Story Text

Plans to create a new seafood institute on the edge of Grimsby have been officially announced by North East Lincolnshire Council.

The Humber Seafood Institute will become a world class academic facility and will provide services for the entire industry, from catching to processing and retailing, according to Fish Update.

Local seafood processors have given the project their support and building is expected to be completed in early 2008.

The council's report stated: "The facility will provide a broad spectrum of complementary services to support the added-value seafood industry, in particular providing access to new product development technical facilities, environmental and biotech laboratories, test production facilities and capacity building that would otherwise not be available, especially within the SME community."

Council chief executive George Krawiec is reported to have said that the scheme will play an

important part in a wider plan to regenerate the fish docks and the industry as a whole and added that the institute could one day become Britain's first fishing university.

<http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/99571251-8B87-4893-ABB5-FB3527F5CFB3/0/humberseafood07171400.doc>>Further information

Asians fond of British food

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

British food is very popular with Asian tourists, according to marketing development consultancy Food from Britain (FFB).

A website survey found that the majority of Asian visitors enjoyed their British cuisine experience to such an extent that they continued to eat British food upon their return home.

Nearly 90 per cent claimed that the standard of UK food safety was either good or excellent and 88 per cent felt the same about the quality of the food.

Fourteen per cent of Asian visitors sampled traditional fish and chips while travelling in the UK and 28 per cent enjoyed afternoon tea.

In addition, over two thirds of respondents purchased British food or drink products to take home with them.

Adrian Bevan, international product development manager at VisitBritain, commented: "The increasing perception of Britain as a 'foodie' nation, with celebrity chefs and the enhanced availability of quality produce, has certainly helped drive tourism outside the main cities.

"We believe this will continue as Britain's reputation as a gastronomic destination grows," he added.

http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/4988/Asian_visitors_love_British_food_survey_shows.html>Further information

Westons celebrates summer with a Kiss

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

Westons Cider has launched a new cider-based beverage, described as "a contemporary, sophisticated addition" to the portfolio.

The new bottled drink, Kiss, is a 3.8 per cent ABV medium dry cider that is available in 500ml bottles.

Produced from Herefordshire apples, the cider is matured in traditional old oak vats and contains fresh juice from raspberries.

The lightly carbonated beverage therefore gives a refreshingly fruity taste and is likely to be the perfect accompaniment to long, hot summer's evenings.

Roger Jackson, commercial director at Westons Cider, commented: "Kiss is a contemporary, sophisticated addition to the Westons portfolio â€“ ripe summer berry taste coupled with a traditional, quality cider."

Mr Jackson added that Kiss is "the perfect, refreshing taste sensation, ideal for summer and throughout the year".

The privately-owned company has been making cider in Herefordshire since 1880 and is currently run by the great-granddaughter of founder Henry Weston.

[Further information](http://www.westonscider.co.uk/images/uploaded/2176341_8785619.pdf)

Bottled water more popular than fizzy drinks

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

Bottled water is now more common in children's lunchboxes than fizzy drinks, according to a new survey.

The TNS Lunchbox survey has revealed that 28.4 million school lunchboxes contained bottled water in 2005, compared to just 17.1 million which contained fizzy drinks.

According to the authors, this represents the first time that bottled water has been more popular than fizzy drinks, confirming the general trend for natural, additive-free beverages.

Although the news has been welcomed, experts are still concerned that children are not drinking enough water in this hot weather.

Sally Stanley, marketing director of Highland Spring, told Checkout magazine: "Parents should not assume their children are drinking enough water during the day just because they are at school.

"Simple measures like giving children bottled water in their school and gym bags will encourage them to stay properly hydrated, as well as improving their overall health and well being."

Highland Spring enjoyed record sales in June, with the hot weather fuelling a 16 per cent rise in total sales.

[Further information](http://www.checkoutmagazine.co.uk/market_update/market_update_story.ehtml?o=2085)

Confectionery firm produces edible chocolate boxes

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

A Staffordshire company has come up with a novel way of countering the ever-increasing problem of packaging waste â€“ by encouraging its customers to eat it!

Chokolit, a family-run business that focuses on speciality and bespoke chocolates, has developed an edible container for its chocolates which can be enjoyed once the sweets themselves have been finished.

Made from coloured cocoa butter, the company's innovative, decorative chocolate boxes taste as good as they look, according to Phil and Mary Barnett who run the company.

The chocolates may soon be on sale in supermarkets, including Waitrose, according to the Sunday Mirror, where they are expected to retail at around Â£14.

Chokolit prides itself on producing only the best quality chocolates and recommends that its products are eaten within a month of purchase, as they are free from artificial preservatives.

[Further information](http://www.chokolit.co.uk)

Sports drinks with added protein could benefit athletes

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

Adding protein to a conventional sports drink can help to improve athletic performance and limit muscle damage, according to a new study.

Researchers at the James Madison University compared the effects of two different sports drinks – Gatorade and a new drink called Accelerade, which contains protein.

Cyclists drank one of the sports beverages before completing an endurance test, followed by another test 15 hours later.

Those cyclists who drank the protein-containing Accelerade demonstrated a 29 per cent improvement in endurance in the first endurance test and a 40 per cent improvement in the second test.

They also experienced 83 per cent less muscle damage than those cyclists who had drunk Gatorade.

Mike Saunders, director of the university's Human Performance Laboratory, said that the study provided confirmation of the value of adding protein to sports drinks.

He added: "Our results suggest that athletes in all sports, including running, cycling, soccer and tennis, where endurance and recovery are critical, would benefit from a protein-containing sports drink such as Accelerade."

The report is published in the July issue of Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise.

[Further information](http://www.health24.com/news/Fitness/1-911,28366.asp)

Cognis produces new aerating solution for cakes

Date: Tue, 25 Jul 06

Story Text

Food chemicals company Cognis has launched a new aerating solution which is suitable for all kinds of cakes made from whipped batter.

Spongolit 530 is an aerating agent which delivers volume, crumb texture and shelf-life, all of which are important characteristics for high-quality cake products.

The product remains stable even if the batter is beaten for an extended period of time and the agent produces a fine, regular crumb texture which is strong enough to absorb liquid and is suitable for use with cream fillings.

The product incorporates an innovative emulsifier combination with a specially developed manufacturing process and enables bakeries to replace trans fatty acid-rich shortenings by combining Spongolit 530 with trans fatty acid-free oils.

Andreas Funke, product group manager of food technology, commented: "Cognis' Spongolit 530 enables manufacturers to improve their products and to increase the efficiency of their manufacturing processes at the same time.

"The result is an easy-to-handle solution that ensures excellent quality in all types of cakes."

Further information

New ingredient solution for dairy desserts

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

Ingredients manufacturer Tate & Lyle has launched a solution for reduced sugar dairy desserts.

Dairy Dessert Rebalance is suitable for use in a wide range of milk-based desserts, including creme desserts, custards and trifles.

Available in two forms, Dairy Dessert Rebalance 033 is designed for low-fat, reduced-sugars desserts, while Dairy Dessert Rebalance 034 is suitable for low-fat, no-added-sugar products.

The two ingredient solutions contain modified food starch, soluble fibre and speciality sweeteners, including Splenda Sucralose.

The 033 variant provides a 35 per cent reduction in calories and a 47 per cent reduction in total sugars when compared to traditional, full-fat, full-sugar products.

Meanwhile, the 034 variant provides 32 per cent fewer calories and a 59 per cent reduction in sugars.

Rachel Moffatt, European food ingredients marketing manager for Tate & Lyle, said that company research had revealed a clear demand for lighter ingredient options.

"Dairy Dessert Rebalance is a very important step in the light dessert sector," she revealed, "making low-fat, no-added sugars dairy desserts a possibility for the first time."

Ms Moffatt added: "Our research and development team has worked hard to make this a

commercial reality and bring variety and innovation to the dairy dessert sector."

[Further information](http://193.35.126.50/PressReleases/PressRelease1530.asp)

Nanocarriers boost absorbability of ingredients

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

Functional food manufacturers could soon be benefiting from nanotechnology which enables ingredients to be absorbed more quickly by the body.

A German company, Aquanova, is currently negotiating with manufacturers which could soon incorporate the firm's nano-encapsulation technology into their products.

The technology could enable manufacturers to increase the so-called 'bioavailability' of ingredients such as vitamin E, soy isoflavones and Omega 3's so that they can form the basis of new functional products.

Frank Behman, corporate development officer at Aquanova, told Food Manufacture that many of the active ingredients that manufacturers want to include in functional foods are fat or water insoluble.

"If you can increase or speed up the absorption of ingredients like lycopene, vitamin C, Omega 3's or soy isoflavones, you can use less of them in products and increase their effectiveness without using additives," he explained.

The company has developed technology based on nanocarriers which, according to Mr Behman, mimic the body's natural delivery systems for nutrients and make ingredients more easily absorbed.

The clear 'solubulises' are suitable for use in anything from sports drinks to food supplements.

"In contrast to the active ingredients they contain, our solubulises can be used in foods without the addition of additives, any further processing steps or a matrix design," Mr Behman revealed, adding: "They are also perfect for clear beverages as they are crystal clear and transparent in aqueous solutions."

[Further information](http://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/3498/Nanocarriers_boost_bioavailability,_says_German_firm.html)

China reveals plans for cosmic fruit and veg

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

China is planning to develop space-enhanced fruit and vegetables, according to the country's media reports.

The Shijian-8 satellite is expected to be launched in September, enabling 2,000 seeds to be exposed to cosmic radiation and micro-gravity for two weeks.

Nine types of seed will be sent into space, including grains, cash crops and forage plants, amid hopes that the research could provide a solution for feeding the nation's 1.3 billion inhabitants.

Previous experiments have revealed that rice and wheat seeds produce increased yields after spending time in space, with tomato and green pepper seeds yielding a ten to 20 per cent larger harvest.

Sun Laiyan, head of the China National Space Administration, told China Daily that the satellite would enable scientists to attempt to cultivate "high-yield and high-quality plants".

"Exposed to special environments such as cosmic radiation and micro-gravity, some seeds will mutate to such an extent that they may produce much higher yields and improved quality," he revealed.

[Further information](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/home/2006-07/24/content_647365.htm)

Green tea drinks boost the metabolism

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

Snapple has launched a new range of premium green teas which help to boost the metabolism and contain natural antioxidants.

Snapple Green Teas contain 55mg of antioxidant EGCG, the highest concentration of any ready-to-drink green tea.

The new drinks are available in original, mango and Asian pear flavours and are free from synthetic sugars.

Holly Mensch, vice president of marketing for Snapple, commented: "The development of Green Teas with EGCG is an important one, as consumers look for more out of their foods and beverages.

"They want pure, all-natural, high quality ingredients with great taste and real functional benefits" Snapple Green Tea is a perfect fit."

Less than a third of consumers are aware of EGCG, according to Ms Mensch, and just five per cent are aware that green tea can help to boost the metabolism.

Studies have revealed that consuming 300mg of EGCG helps to boost the metabolism and green tea is also said to lower cholesterol levels and help to protect against some cancers.

[Further information](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=47806)

Food waste could provide sustainable energy source

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

Researchers at the University of Birmingham have found a way to extract hydrogen from confectionery waste, enabling it to be used as a renewable energy source.

Scientists working at the University's School of Biosciences set up a fermenter containing E. coli bacteria, a caramel-like waste product and nitrogen.

Sugars in the food waste were fermented by the bacteria, generating a range of organic acids which were then converted into hydrogen.

Hydrogen is one of the cleanest fuels, producing no harmful emissions. When used to power a fuel cell, the only by-product to be produced is water.

The process could have a "major impact" on the way food waste is handled in the future, according to the researchers, who suggest that food factories could use their own waste products to generate energy in order to power their manufacturing processes.

Further information

New Welsh cheeses to launch this week

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 06

Story Text

The Carmarthenshire Cheese Company is launching a range of white mould-ripened cheeses at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show this week.

Pont Gar is made from fresh cows' milk and is matured for five weeks, producing a smooth and creamy texture with a slightly sweet taste, according to website 50Connect.

Established earlier this year by Steve and Sian Elin Peace, the company aims to fill a gap in the market for soft and speciality cheeses.

The range includes blue, smoked and garlic & herb varieties and is likely to appear in major UK supermarkets in the near future.

Steve Peace told the website: "We have worked at breakneck speed to create a state of the art manufacturing facility as well as developing recipes to maximise local milk supplies using new, unique recipes.

Pont Gar has already won several awards at trade shows and was nominated as a finalist in the Tesco Cheese Challenge.

Further information

Can GI help consumers pick the right foods?

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

Glycemic index (GI) is a useful tool for consumers, according to dietary specialists at Stratecon International Consultants (SIC), but other terminology should be used to encourage consumers to eat healthier carbohydrate-based food.

GI is being increasingly used by food packagers as a way to show how carbohydrate-based foods affect blood sugar levels, with a higher GI based food raising the blood sugar for up to two hours after consumption.

Foods found to be low in GI, reducing the rate of carbohydrate absorption, could be beneficial in a number of ways. Such foods could reduce blood lipids, reduce demand for insulin and provide improved blood glucose control - factors which contribute to diabetes, some cancers and coronary heart disease.

However, nutritionists at SIC showed concern that the concept was tricky to grasp for some consumers.

"There is recognition that GI as a communication tool has limitations," the specialists claimed.

"This is because the GI concept is overly technical for most consumers. It also does not directly translate into a meaningful consumer benefit."

They added: "Perhaps a more useful approach is to reframe the discussion with consumers to focus on more energy/vitality, more effective weight management, digestive health, reduced risk of type II diabetes or steady blood sugar" all of which are directly observed and experienced benefits."

Tesco stocks new Blason mini range

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

Supermarket giant Tesco is to stock Blason de Bourgogne's first two wines from the brand's "mini" range.

The Blason de Bourgogne Chardonnay and Blason de Bourgogne Pinot Noir will both be available in 250ml bottles to customers of the supermarket, individually priced at £1.99 a bottle, Checkout magazine reports.

Marc Vachet, export director of wine maker Cave de Buxy, said: "With a brand such as Blason, it is important to keep moving forward and coming up with innovative ideas to boost sales and keep the brand fresh and exciting. The Blason minis seemed like a good route to go down and initial feedback from retailers led us to believe that they would be a success.

"Blason de Bourgogne is always striving to make Burgundy approachable to the consumer and we expect the quarter bottles to open up the region to a new group of customers, who might not ordinarily want to spend £5 or more on a bottle."

The wine used is the same blend as that found within 750ml measures. Blason 750ml bottles are already available in major supermarkets.

Healthy alternative to crisps launched

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

A healthy alternative to crisps has been launched by an Edinburgh-based entrepreneur, and has already grabbed a contract with an American school.

The snack, dubbed Snapz, resembles the texture and shape of crisps but is made entirely out of fruit. Bags contain no sugar or salt, less than one per cent of fat and are neither baked nor fried.

Designed by Bahram Ajodani, Snapz have already been snapped up by the Davis School District in Utah, which has ordered 50,000 bags a month, while Californian governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is set to see them introduced in his state by next year.

Business partner Finlay Lockie told the Edinburgh Evening News that he and Mr Ajodani had worked together to find a way of making dried apples appear like crisps, in order to appeal to kids.

"He thought it would work if he managed to hoodwink his children into eating something that was like crisps, but was actually good for them," he said.

Mr Lockie added: "Davis [School District] did a trial in May where they bought one container of Apple Snapz and started substituting the crisps on the trays one day a week. The kids went crazy for them. They loved them."

Retailers urged to cut food miles

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

"Food miles" clocked up by a combination of road and air deliveries generated close to 18 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2004, an increase of six per cent from the previous year.

Figures released by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have revealed that distances travelled by food on its way to supermarkets and restaurants are now at record levels, highlighting the need for retailers to look more closely at the possibility of sourcing products locally.

Chris Huhne, environment spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, told the Times that the government needed to do more to encourage supermarkets to use local suppliers.

"Supermarkets are a major part of our communities," he commented. "With one supermarket for every 10,000 people, the big chains have a duty to provide environmentally-friendly alternatives by supporting local producers."

The government has told the food industry that it needs to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent within four years, through cutting journey lengths and concentrating on locally-sourced products.

A spokeswoman for Tesco told the Times that the supermarket had reduced food miles by 23 per cent.

"To ensure availability all year round, we do import some fresh produce," she conceded, adding: "Where we do, we use sea rather than air freight wherever possible – less than three per cent of our total imports are brought in by air."

[Further information](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2279401,00.html)

Threefold increase in peanut allergies

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

The number of people being admitted to hospital with severe allergic reactions has risen more than threefold over the past ten years, with a large proportion caused by foods such as peanuts.

According to a new government review on allergy services, over 30,000 people suffered a potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis in 2004, 3,171 of whom had to be admitted to hospital, and the rate of death has nearly doubled in the past two years.

The authors believe that the rise is likely to be linked to the recent increase in food allergies, with four per cent of the UK's adult population and six per cent of 0 to 3-year-olds now affected.

Peanut allergies are thought to have trebled in the last five years, with more than one per cent of children affected.

Allergic reactions to shellfish are also becoming increasingly common, largely due to the growing popularity of fresh foods and more exotic dishes.

With the number of potential allergens seemingly increasing all the time, food manufacturers have a responsibility to label their products accordingly and there is a growing market for products that are free from these ingredients.

The FDIN's Free-From 'Allergy & Intolerance' seminar is due to take place in Daventry, Northamptonshire on Wednesday 20th September. Find out more [HERE](http://www.fdin.co.uk/seminars/next.html).

For further information on the government review, click [HERE](http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.aspReleaseID=215622&NewsAreaID=2)

New Sharwood's sauces inspired by lesser-known recipes

Date: Fri, 21 Jul 06

Story Text

Sharwood's is releasing a new range of Asian cooking sauces later this month.

The collection is designed to provide consumers with a choice of more unusual flavours, according to website mad.co.uk, and has been inspired by traditional dishes found in Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Design consultancy Jones Knowles Ritchie (JKR) has developed the packaging for the range, using gold patterning around the logo to make the new collection stand out from Sharwood's original Indian, Thai and Chinese-inspired sauces.

The new packaging also reflects the nature of the individual sauces, with the packaging for the Sri Lankan Devil Curry sauce displaying traditional Sri Lankan peacock images.

Helen Williams, marketing manager at Sharwood's, commented: "JKR has created a bold and impactful new design for our new range of sauces which brings to life the regional differentiation of the range in an innovative and authentic way.

"We believe the designs bring new news to the category and will have tremendous stand-out on fixture."

Sharwood's is the leading UK brand in Asian sauce meals, with 45 per cent of households thought to use their products.

Further information

Tea-making gadget means no drips or burns

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

An inventor has come up with a cunning gadget to help make the perfect cup of tea, without dripping any excess liquid from the teabag.

Dr Martin Almond decided that there had to be an easier way to deal with teabags than the traditional spoon or tongs and set about designing a tool to relieve the problem.

The result, following various prototypes and patents, is the unique teatool – a cage with a handle which allows the teabag to be lowered into the cup, squeezed and disposed of, all without dripping liquid or burning fingers.

Dr Almond commented: "The cup of tea has been an icon of British life since it first appeared in England in the 17th century and the teabag itself was introduced over 100 years ago – yet it has taken until now for someone to develop a product which will ensure the tea-making process is simple and mess free."

The teatool is available in black, blue and red and costs from £5.95.

Further information

Negotiations underway for novel beverage packaging

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

A US packaging company is currently holding talks with an un-named multi-national retail brand for the exclusive use of its patent-protected beverage packaging system with one of its private label beverages.

Gil Arvizu, president and chief executive officer of Sports Pouch Beverage Company, said that the unique beverage packaging system, which combines a flexible pouch with a child-friendly pull-push spout, has the ability to "revolutionise the drink industry".

"The interest we have received to date from substantial global players reinforces that we have a winning product that is the next generation of how beverages will be presented to the marketplace," he commented.

The product benefits from both an innovative practical design and the significant cost-savings that it can provide for the single-serve juice/drink sector, Mr Arvizu said, adding that the negotiations, which are now in an advanced stage, reinforced the marketability of the packaging.

"The beverage sector is experiencing substantial growth and I believe Sports Pouch Beverage will capture a significant share of that market," he added.

[Further information](http://uk.biz.yahoo.com/17072006/290/sports-pouch-beverage-company-negotiations-major-multi-national-retail-brand.html)

Japan spies UK market for collagen marshmallows

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

A Japanese sweets manufacturer is hoping to introduce one of its more unusual products onto the European market.

Eiwa Confectionery, one of the country's most popular confectioners, has created collagen marshmallows which, it claims, help to plump up your cheeks and lips.

The marshmallows, which are a recent addition to the growing army of so-called "functional foods", are currently available in blueberry, cherry and grapefruit flavours and are said to look and feel like traditional marshmallows.

According to Eiwa Confectionery, the sweets, which each contain 3,000 mg of collagen, have the same effect as a collagen injection but, at the equivalent of just 60 pence per packet, cost significantly less than the £200-plus price tag associated with the cosmetic procedure.

A company spokesman told the Scotsman that the product has so far been an "enormous success" in Japan and confirmed that the company hopes to export to the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

"We feel it will sell well in supermarkets or sweet shops, as it does in Japan. That is our ambition," he said.

The functional food market was worth an estimated £1.1 billion at the end of 2005, according to Mintel, fuelled by a shift in consumer diet and lifestyle.

[Further information](http://living.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=1045912006)

Food companies target kids via internet

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

Food groups are using the internet to boost their marketing to children, according to a new study.

The study suggests that food companies are looking for innovative ways to market their products, as governments in both the UK and the US are increasingly clamping down on the number of junk food advertisements allowed on television.

The Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a survey of 77 US-based food company websites and found that 85 per cent of the top US food brands target children with branded websites, in addition to their regular television advertising, the Financial Times reports.

The study claims that the marketing material found on websites is far more extensive than that contained in the average 30-second TV advert.

However, companies are able to do this without fear of regulation, as the web content is classed as 'editorial' rather than 'advertising' content and is therefore outside the scope of regulators.

Nearly three quarters of the websites contained games in which the company's product was featured and 64 per cent of sites used viral marketing to encourage children to let their friends know about a product.

Vicky Rideout, vice-president of Kaiser and research overseer, told the Financial Times that, although online advertising reaches fewer people than television advertising, the reach is "much deeper".

[Further information](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/c64a10e4-1756-11db-abad-0000779e2340.html)

Food processing machines research gets funding boost

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

A £7.35 million grant from the UK's engineering and physical sciences research council will help to improve the efficiency of food manufacturing.

The University of Bath has received its largest ever grant to further its research into making design and manufacturing more efficient and effective.

The university's Engineering Innovative Manufacturing Research Centre will use the money to improve the speed and accuracy of systems such as food processing and packaging machines.

It will also develop systems that enable prototype parts to be made more cheaply and will look at improving the speed at which manufacturers can switch between making different products.

Professor Chris McMahon, the centre's director, commented: "Our design and manufacturing sector has to be focussed and it is therefore important that we invest heavily in ensuring that what we do well at – such as food processing and packaging – is improved even further so that we remain competitive."

[Further information](http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/unf/unf100.html)

information

Nutrition information does affect consumer choice, study finds

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 06

Story Text

Providing consumers with nutritional information does have an effect on their subsequent food choices, according to a new study.

Researchers from the Penn State School of Hospitality Management found that high school students who were provided with nutritional information about cafeteria lunch options were able to make better food choices and were more satisfied with their lunch programmes.

The study schools were divided into two separate groups. One group were told to post information in a similar manner to the US Food and Drug Administration's nutrition facts labels found on packaged foods.

The second group of schools acted as the control group and were told to make no changes to their regular cafeteria setup.

The researchers found that the number of healthy choices increased in the group provided with nutrition information.

In addition, the students claimed to be more satisfied with the quality of both food and service, even though the food itself had not changed.

The researchers commented that students who were provided with nutrition information "consistently rated appearance and quality of food higher" and said that informed choice played a large part in "yielding greater customer satisfaction with dining occasions".

"Providing nutrition information at the point of service increased the student ratings of school nutrition programmes that already were rated above average, especially in food quality," they concluded.

Further information

Beef spoilage affected by packaging method

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

Researchers have discovered that different packaging methods may have an effect on the rate of spoilage of refrigerated beef.

Beef is one of the most perishable foods, widely attributed to high water content and an abundance of surface nutrients.

The scientists used three different methods of modified-atmosphere (Map) packaging; the first consisting of air, the second composed of 60 per cent oxygen and 40 per cent carbon dioxide, and the third made up of 20 per cent oxygen and 40 per cent carbon dioxide.

The second method produced the best results over the first seven days and spoilage was only detected between seven and 14 days.

The study also revealed that each method seemed to be favoured by different microbial species.

The researchers believe that their study is the first to report on the changes of spoilage-related microbial flora during meat storage.

"The assessment of microbial species diversity occurring in meat during storage and the study of the response and adaptability of the species to different antimicrobial conditions will be fundamental for improving and implementing packaging systems aimed at prolonging the shelf life of meat products," they said.

[Further information](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-07/asfm-tft071306.php)

Ingredient supplier develops natural meat cure

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

Danish food ingredients supplier Chr. Hansen has developed a new natural cure which can be used to achieve the same colour and flavour as cured meats.

Curing, which is used to stabilize flavour, delay rancidity and establish the characteristic pink colour of meat, can be challenging for those food producers who want to market their products as "natural".

This new cure, however, is free from artificial ingredients and therefore provides consumers with a natural choice.

"Processors will find that our natural cure, coupled with the knowledge of our technical experts, can assist them in developing and producing foods that satisfy the consumer's discriminating tastes and desire for more natural foods, as well as meet shelf life requirements and production methods," said Eva Stenby, marketing manager for meat cultures at the company.

The company has been supplying natural ingredient solutions to the food and nutrition industries for over 130 years and has agents distributed around the world.

[Further information](http://www.chr-hansen.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=www.chr-hansen.com%2FNewsArticle%2FNewsArticle&c=NewsArticle&cid=1152013408618)

New technology provides egg traceability

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

A US company is introducing new technology to mark eggs with a tamperproof freshness and traceability code.

EggFusion, which provides solutions for applying freshness marks to eggshells, will enable consumers to determine the freshness and origin of the eggs they buy, regardless of whether or

not they have been removed from the carton.

The company places a micro-thin groove onto the surface of the egg using patent-pending laser marking technology in a process so fast that it does not reduce the speed and efficiency of the production line.

Consumers can then type their individual traceability code into a website and retrieve information about the location and date when the egg was packaged.

Shaun Emerson, chief executive officer of EggFusion, said that fresh and safe food are two of the most important selling points for any grocer.

"We offer retailers a value-added service they can use to provide their customers with increased confidence in the freshness of the eggs they purchase for themselves and their families," he said.

Although the technology is currently only being used on the east coast of the USA, the company hopes to extend its distribution in the near future.

[Further information](http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/060717/nym037.html?v=65)

Food industry buyers in for processing and packaging treat

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

The PPMA Show will take place from September 26th to 28th this year, showcasing the very latest in processing and packaging innovation.

The show is the UK's biggest annual event for the processing and packaging industries and recent advances in packaging, handling equipment and carton and filling machines will all be on display.

Over 300 exhibitors will demonstrate a range of machinery, attracting hundreds of visitors from the food and drink industries.

James Coleman, PPMA show marketing manager, commented: "Visitors to the PPMA Show will have an opportunity to see for themselves the very latest equipment and discuss their specific requirements with knowledgeable suppliers who are experts in their fields."

Mr Coleman explained that the machinery sector is very dynamic, "with manufacturers continually responding to new demands from customers for greater efficiencies, higher speeds and further integration, or to devise solutions for new pack or product types".

The event, now in its 19th year, provides a cost-effective way for companies to demonstrate and sell their technology to food industry buyers.

[Further information](http://www.ppma.co.uk)

Omega 3 lamb gets green light

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

Welsh sheep farmers have been given permission to produce meat which is enriched with Omega 3 oils.

Nine farmers from the Llangwyrfon area of west Wales are hoping to produce a niche product by adding the fatty-acids to the animals' feed.

Arwyn Jones, technology transfer officer with Hybu Cig Cymru Meat Promotion in Wales, told the Western Mail that the farmers are conducting trials to try and find the best feed formula.

"If successful, high Omega 3 Welsh lamb could join bread and milk as super healthy foods on supermarket shelves," he commented.

The trial meat will be sent to Bristol University, where researchers will conduct analyses to determine whether Omega 3 levels have increased and whether the flavour of the meat is affected.

"Hopefully, the farmers will be able to secure a contract with a supermarket and set up a specialist range, with production starting as early as next autumn," Mr Jones concluded.

Further information

New flexible packaging paper produced

Date: Wed, 19 Jul 06

Story Text

A new paper, ideal for flexible packaging use, has been launched onto the market.

M-real, which is one of Europe's leading suppliers of paperboard, fine paper and coated magazine paper, has now launched Simcastor Flex – a one-side coated, bleached kraft paper which is suitable for demanding rotogravure printing.

A company statement said: "M-real strives to address product issues that are the most relevant to the competitiveness of its customers.

"Accordingly, the new Simcastor Flex performs reliably in production and enables designs that appeal to today's consumers."

The material has been approved for food packaging by the BfR (Federal Institute for Risk Assessment) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is manufactured according to HACCP hygiene standards.

It can therefore be used for dry foods and drinks, confectionery, chocolate and pet foods, as well as a number of other products in both the food and pharmaceutical industries.

<a href="http://www.m-real.com/wps/portal/lut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_CH/.cmd/ad/.ar/sa.fireAptrixPortletAction/.c/6_0_69/.ce/7_0_CU/.p/5_0_6B/.d/1?PC_7_0_CU_aprtixPortletAction=UpdateAptrixPortletCont

ext&WCM_Context=http://www.m-real.com/ilwwcm/connect/OneWeb/Press%20room/News/News_2006-06-30_Simcastor%20Flex_english">Further information

Consumers to enjoy Hovis revamp

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

Leading bread brand Hovis is investing $\pounds 20$ million on an overhaul of its product range, including a $\pounds 7$ million investment in recipe improvements.

The brand, which is the UK market leader and is worth nearly $\pounds 250$ million, hopes to confirm bread's position as the "foundation of a healthy diet", according to Checkout Magazine.

Brendan Rice, head of marketing, told the magazine: "Hovis is putting significant investment into encouraging families to reappraise bread as the foundation of a healthy diet.

"The recipe improvements provide consumers of all generations with the highest quality bread, and the extensions to our premium portfolio demonstrate Hovis's dedication to meeting the changing needs of our consumers."

Hovis Square White will now benefit from improved texture, whiteness and slice appearance, while Hovis Wholemeal has a new, maltier flavour and thicker, larger slices, according to the company.

In addition, Hovis is expanding the range to include Supreme White, Farmhouse Best of Both and Hovis Oatmeal Granary.

Healthy meal-kits aid Asda's assault on branded goods

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

One of the UK's leading supermarket chains is launching a new healthy range of meal-kits to help consumers prepare quick, nutritious meals.

Asda is replacing its Meals Made Easy range with a new line of Go Cook! meal-kits, according to Marketing, which will be available in stores this month.

The products include pre-measured ingredients and a recipe card which gives simple instructions on how to prepare the meal.

The new range will include around 65 different dishes containing fresh ingredients with no artificial colours or hydrogenated fats.

Example meals include mango and beer chicken, salmon risotto and beef Wellington.

The company has previously told Marketing that it hopes to drive consumers towards the store's own-brand products and away from branded rivals and, if they prove successful, the new Go Cook! meal-kits will undoubtedly help Asda achieve this goal.

Asda is a subsidiary of Wal-Mart, following a $\pounds 6.7$ billion deal in 1999, and is currently the

second largest supermarket chain in the UK after Tesco.

[Further information](http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/br/article/567880/asda-unveils-healthy-go-cook-meal-kits)

Researchers propose silkworm diet for astronauts

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

Astronauts could soon be treated to a delicious meal of silkworms, according to Chinese researchers.

Scientists at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics have discovered that the amount of protein gained by eating five or six silkworm pupae is equivalent to that found in one egg, according to Xinhua news agency reports.

There are 18 kinds of amino-acids in a silkworm pupa, eight of which are vital for humans.

Yang Yunan, a researcher at the university, told the 36th Committee on Space Research (Cospar) Scientific Assembly that this could provide many benefits for space travellers.

"From a nutritional point of view, it has a high protein content and efficient nutrition conversion," he is reported to have said.

"On a practical level, it is easy to raise, it has a short lifespan and doesn't take up much space."

The researchers found that a silkworm is capable of producing edible protein after just one month.

"Also, it doesn't smell and produces little waste water, making it a satisfactory space food," Mr Yunan added.

[Further information](http://english.people.com.cn/200607/18/eng20060718_284001.html)

Seafood gaining in popularity

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

Consumers are becoming more confident about preparing seafood at home, fuelling increased demand for fresh fish and shellfish.

Visitors to the Cardigan Bay Seafood Festival, held last weekend in the Welsh seaside town of Aberaeron, were able to sample a range of seafood dishes, prepared on site by expert chefs.

Food festivals are a good way of sharing culinary knowledge and, with the British public becoming more acquainted with foreign foods during overseas' trips, their appetite for learning how to prepare their own seafood is growing.

Festival organiser Menna Heulyn told the Western Mail that the public are becoming more adventurous when it comes to trying new seafood dishes.

"There is a huge increase in seafood and people are taking far more interest in what's living off the shores of Wales," she commented.

"They get inspired by demonstrations on how to prepare and cook them, so they try it themselves."

Jeremy Percy, chief executive of the Welsh Federation of Fishermen's Associations, added that the demand for organic fish has been increasing.

"We are working with the Welsh Assembly to try to get more Omega 3-rich fish eaten at home and in schools," he revealed.

Omega 3 fatty acids are found mainly in oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines.

The Food Standards Agency recommends that we eat at least two portions of fish a week, including one portion of oily fish.

Further information

Scottish scientists to study wine 'corking'

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

Researchers from the University of Paisley are part of a joint effort to study the problem of "cork taint" which costs the wine industry over \$10 billion (Â£5.5 billion) every year.

The project will combine the efforts of researchers in Lisbon, Morocco, Tunisia and Italy and will study pesticide contamination in cork forests, thought to be responsible for cork taint.

The chemical which causes corking is thought to be produced when pesticides mix with wood fungus and, when the cork eventually comes into contact with wine, it makes it smell mouldy.

Between one and five per cent of wine products are affected by the problem and it is hoped that the research will alleviate the difficulties faced by the wine industry.

Professor Andrew Hursthouse, professor in environmental geochemistry at the University of Paisley, commented: "This is an exciting opportunity for our research to contribute to understanding a real human health risk problem and collaborate with leading research institutes in Europe and north Africa.

"The cork industry is important to the north African economy and it is essential that the cork taint problem is investigated both to support the use of real cork by the wine industry and to help protect biodiversity in the Mediterranean coastline."

The three-year project, which is being funded by a Â£247,000 grant from the Nato Science for Peace programme, will also feed into management and remediation strategies for food chain pollutants.

[Further information](http://www.paisley.ac.uk/news/response-news.asp?id=819)

Carlsberg hopes to edge out competition

Date: Tue, 18 Jul 06

Story Text

Carlsberg is the latest brewery to go down the citrus route, following news of the launch of its new, fruit-flavoured variant.

Carlsberg Edge will be a 4.6 per cent ABV, lime-flavoured lager and will be available on the on and off-trade next month, according to website mad.co.uk.

The launch follows close on the heels of Foster's Twist, which is due to be unveiled later this month, and Beck's Green Lemon, which is currently being trialled by InBev in both on and off-trades.

Darran Britton, marketing director at Carlsberg UK, told mad.co.uk: "Carlsberg Edge gives consumers the drinkability of a flavoured alcoholic beverage but with the credibility and provenance of a beer.

"The packaging design has been key to the development process with its stylish and contemporary look appealing strongly to our target market."

The new brand will be aimed at both male and female drinkers who enjoy both premium packaged lagers and flavoured alcoholic beverages.

Carlsberg was originally exported to the UK in the 1860s and has since become a firm favourite with consumers.

[Further information](http://www.mad.co.uk/Main/Home/Articlex/6c89947d42c24ea79beff04bf817b4ba/Carlsberg-in-citrus-lager-launch.html)

Lamb to be enriched with Omega 3

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

Welsh farmers are hoping to produce lamb with added Omega 3, in order to make the meat healthier for consumers.

Arwyn Thomas told BBC Radio 4's Farming Today programme that she hopes to add Omega 3 to her lambs' diet to enhance the resulting meat.

Ms Thomas revealed: "We've approached the HCC, which is a meat promotion company in Wales, and they thought it was quite a good idea as well.

"If we will be successful then of course we will want to feed this to our lambs and hopefully we'll have a niche product then that we'll be able to market to customers," she added.

Ms Thomas plans to trial a number of different feeds to determine the best way to add Omega 3

to Welsh lamb.

Experts recommend that foods containing Omega 3, such as oily fish, are consumed as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Food manufacturers have recently been launching a number of products enhanced with Omega 3, including milk and margarine.

[Further information on Omega 3](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/nutritionessentials/fishandshellfish)

New packaging products made from cornstarch

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

A leading manufacturing company has launched a new range of biodegradable packaging products.

Veriplast International, which produces innovative disposable food and drink packaging, has unveiled its latest products, which are made from NatureWorks PLA resin.

The VeriPure range is made from cornstarch, which is a renewable resource and helps to reduce waste.

International sales and marketing director at Veriplast, Tom Ormerod, commented that the products had been developed in response to consumer demand for environmentally-friendly packaging.

"Consumers are changing and increasingly conscious of the consequences of their retail behaviour; they are demanding healthier food and packaging," he told *Plastics and Rubber Weekly*.

"This new range is both sustainable and functional. Using VeriPure will add value to our customers' brands and help them clearly demonstrate their corporate social responsibility," he added.

The new range includes snack trays, lidded containers, salad bowls, drinking cups, plates and fresh food trays.

[Further information](http://www.veriplast.co.uk/index.cfm)

FSA adverts to maintain salt awareness

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is running a ten-second television advert throughout the summer in a bid to increase awareness about the need to limit salt intake.

The advert, which will run until October, features a selection of animated food packages which talk about their salt content.

Animated packets of spaghetti bolognese, chicken curry and meatballs will endeavour to emphasise messages such as "Eat no more than 6g of salt per day" and "Check the labels for lower salt products".

The adverts will be shown during popular television shows, including ITV's flagship soap, Coronation Street, and are particularly designed to target women between the ages of 25 and 54.

The guideline recommendations produced by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) suggest that salt intake should be limited to 6g per day for adults to prevent increased risk of high blood pressure, stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Both the FSA and the Department of Health have been working with the food industry to try and reduce the amount of salt in processed food products.

[Further information](http://www.salt.gov.uk/index.shtml)

New flavour brought in amid Doritos reshuffle

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

Walkers Crisps is making a host of changes to its popular Doritos range, according to media reports.

The snack brand is bringing in a new flavour, as well as dropping a number of the less popular products.

The range will now include a new Sizzling Barbecue flavour, which is bound to be particularly popular over the summer months, and the Hint of Lime and Lightly Salted flavours that were previously part of the Dippas range will now be incorporated into the Doritos brand.

Cara Beeby, trade marketing manager at Walkers' brand owner Pepsico, told the Publican that the new flavours would help to drive the Doritos brand forward.

"We know that new flavours drive growth. The introduction of Doritos Extreme Chilli Heatwave grew the brand by 45 per cent," Ms Beeby revealed.

"Sizzling Barbecue is a more contemporary flavour that scored very highly in taste tests and we believe it will bring incremental value to the brand."

[Further information](http://www.thepublican.com/story.asp?sectioncode=7&storycode=52353&c=1)

[Further information](http://www.thepublican.com/story.asp?sectioncode=7&storycode=52353&c=1)

Molluscs and lupin to be added to EU allergens?

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

The seemingly ever-increasing inventory of food ingredients that must be declared on EU food packaging could be about to grow even longer, with proposals to add molluscs and lupin to the list.

A draft directive proposing the inclusion of the two potential allergens is due to be discussed today by the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCOFAH).

Evidence suggests that many people who are allergic to peanuts are also likely to react to lupin, of which there are approximately 450 different species.

Molluscs, meanwhile, account for around a fifth of all seafood allergies and studies have shown that those individuals who are allergic to crustacea, such as crabs, lobsters and prawns, have a strong likelihood of also being allergic to molluscs such as snails, mussels and scallops.

Simon Flanagan, allergens consultant at Reading Scientific Services (RSSL), said that the addition of molluscs and lupin to the EU list would further raise the stakes for manufacturers.

"Both molluscs and lupin are used in their natural state and can be processed as food ingredients," Mr Flanagan revealed.

The consultant revealed that laboratory tests already exist for lupin, while tests for molluscs are currently in the final development stages.

"However, the emphasis for controlling these ingredients will have to be on improved communication, setting tighter supplier agreements, and the proper implementation of HACCP [Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points] plans that are designed to address allergens as a specific concern," he added.

Allergens are a growing concern for the food industry and the FDIN has therefore organised a Free-From 'Allergy & Intolerance' seminar, scheduled to be held in Daventry, Northamptonshire on Wednesday 20th September.

For further information on the seminar, take a look [HERE](http://www.fdin.co.uk/seminars/ffai.html)

For further information on the story, take a look [HERE](http://www.laboratorytalk.com/news/rea/rea160.html)

Coating could reduce bacterial adhesion to equipment

Date: Mon, 17 Jul 06

Story Text

A team of researchers has developed a new coating that limits the amount of bacterial adhesion to equipment surfaces.

The coating can be used on all types of equipment where bacterial levels need to be minimised and should be of immense benefit to both the medical and food sectors.

Ruth Baumberger Schmid, research manager at one of the research partners, Sintef, commented: "We have used medical catheters as an example and have conducted all our tests on this product, but this research would be equally beneficial for production equipment in the food industry."

The research centred on a special fatty substance that is produced by bacteria in deep coal mines.

By coating the catheter's surface with a layer of these molecules, the researchers found that they

could reduce bacterial adhesion by up to 75 per cent.

"A tight layer of molecules will resemble a biological membrane, for example a cell wall," Dr Schmid explained.

"We tried to imitate a biological surface to which bacteria could not attach."

Importantly, the researchers also discovered that the coating has no negative effects when it comes into contact with living organisms, suggesting that it could be suitable for use with medical and food production equipment.

[Further information](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=47355)

Light version of Thai beer launched

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

The popular Thai beer brand, Singha Beer, now has a new cousin in the form of Singha Light.

The 3.5 per cent ABV beer has already been available in a number of other countries since March but the launch represents the first time the new, lighter version has been made available to UK consumers.

Singha Beer enjoys a high level of popularity in the UK and its brewers, from Thailand's Boon Rawd brewery, hope that the light version will be welcomed by health conscious consumers.

The original Singha beer, a six per cent ABV barley malt beer with a strong hop character, was first brewed in the 1930s and is now available in 37 countries, according to the company's website.

It first came to the UK in 1976 and has since maintained its position as the number one selling Thai beer in the UK.

[Further information](http://www.thepublican.com/story.asp?sectioncode=7&storycode=52323&c=3)

Gluten-free lager aimed at food intolerants

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

Hambleton Ales, a microbrewery based near Thirsk in North Yorkshire, has launched a new gluten-free lager.

GFL is a 4.8 per cent pale lager-style beer, according to the company's website, and carries the logo of the Coeliac Society.

The company, which won a Tesco Beer Innovation Award in 2005, already produces a gluten-free ale, GFA, which was the first gluten-free beer to be brewed in Britain.

Hambleton Ales hopes that the new product will provide greater choice for those consumers

who suffer from food intolerances.

Nick Stafford, brewery owner, told the Morning Advertiser that it would be vital to target women, "both as drinkers and shoppers".

"We were delighted by their response to our research and now we can widen the appeal of our gluten-free range, especially to younger men and women, through GFL," he said.

The market for products aimed at consumers with food intolerants is estimated to be worth around Â£90 million per year.

[Further information](http://www.hambletonales.co.uk/gfa.htm)

Fresh pasta dishes come with infused oils

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

Waitrose has added two new flavours to its popular range of fresh gourmet pasta.

Rather than adding pasta sauce to the dishes, each product in the range comes with its own infused oil which can be simply drizzled onto the pasta prior to serving.

"Our fresh filled pasta is made using only the finest quality ingredients, free range egg pasta, and each flavour comes complete with its own miniature bottle of infused oil, a first for any supermarket," the company said in a statement.

The new additions to the range are Rosemary and Potato Fiorelli with a rosemary infused oil and Goat's Cheese and Red Pepper Fiorelli with a balsamic glaze.

Waitrose said that the idea to use infused oils was taken from an ancient Italian tradition, where oils are added to pasta in order to enable their flavours to "shine through".

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

Novel drink ideas could kick-start trends

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

Italian winery Ecco Domani has announced the launch of its new wine-based drinks, which it believes will rapidly become the latest trend.

The company hopes that the new concoctions, Ecco Domani, Dolce Domani and Ecco Sidro, will give wine a more fashionable appearance.

Due to be introduced this month, each new drink concept is made from one of the company's celebrated wines.

Ecco Freddo consists of a blend of Ecco Domani's 2005 Pinot Grigio, watermelon and pineapple juice.

Dolce Domani is made from the company's merlot and lime juice, while Ecco Sidro contains a

2004 Chianti, apple cider, chai tea powder and ginger juice.

Marketing director David Bowman said that the new drinks add "an enjoyable, refreshing twist" to the company's wines.

"It's the next evolution to the beloved sangria and we see it as an emerging trend that consumers will readily embrace," he commented.

[Further information](http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/07-13-2006/0004396094&EDATE=)

Revolutionary green coffee cup unveiled

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

An all-natural paper hot beverage cup has been launched in consumer outlets which produces no waste when it breaks down.

Unveiled by Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and International Paper, the cup breaks down into water, carbon dioxide and organic matter.

Whereas most cups are lined with a petroleum-based plastic to prevent leaking, the revolutionary new cup is lined instead with a bio-plastic made from corn.

In addition, the lining material is manufactured in a greenhouse-gas-neutral environment, meaning that no harmful emissions are produced during the process.

T.J. Whalen, vice-president of marketing at Green Mountain, said that the cups are made from "fully renewable resources" and represent part of the company's commitment to environmental stewardship.

The companies have been trying to develop the cup for over a year and plan on producing a series of so-called "ecotainer" products.

Green Mountain's vice-president of environmental affairs, Paul Comey, commented: "Converting to this cup will mean that we consume nearly a quarter of a million pounds less of non-renewable petrochemical materials every year.

"That's why we think this is such a revolutionary eco-friendly cup."

[Further information](http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20060712005272&newsLang=en)

Leading olive oil brand unveils new, milder oil

Date: Fri, 14 Jul 06

Story Text

The UK's leading olive oil brand, Filippo Berio, has launched a new, milder-tasting version of its extra virgin olive oil.

Many people in the UK find the strong flavour of extra virgin olive oil too overpowering and prefer a milder, more subtle taste, according to the company.

Filippo Berio's new Mild Extra Virgin Olive Oil has a "smooth, delicate flavour" and is ideal for everyday family use as it contains only natural ingredients.

It can be used for a variety of purposes, such as for cooking white fish, drizzling on salads and making sauces and marinades, and is useful when preparing food for children, many of whom do not like strong flavours.

A 500ml bottle of the new, milder oil is now available in supermarkets for around £3.99.

Olive oil is the most popular cooking oil in the UK, largely because of its health benefits and versatility, and Filippo Berio's latest innovation, combined with the current trend for healthier eating, should help to provide the market with added impetus.

A key component of the traditional Mediterranean diet, it is believed to add to the longevity and low rates of heart disease found among southern Europeans.

[Further information](http://www.filippoberio.co.uk/home/default.asp)

Website provides allergy advice for caterers

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

A new website has been launched to help the catering industry avoid incidents involving potential allergens.

The site, www.cateringforallergy.org, has been launched by the Anaphylaxis Campaign and provides reliable information on cross-contamination and regulations, as well as downloadable posters to help promote allergen awareness among kitchen staff.

Food allergies have been increasing in number in recent years, with around half a million people thought to be at risk.

Food-related anaphylaxis can, in severe cases, lead to cardiac arrest and death so the threat of suffering an allergic reaction can therefore make sufferers' lives a misery, with the majority of food allergy-related incidents being caused by catered food.

Caterers need to be constantly aware of the need to prevent cross-contamination of potential food allergens and the website should go a long way to improving awareness and reducing the number of incidents.

American nicotine drink eyes expansion

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

A controversial bottled water containing nicotine may soon be launched in Canada and beyond.

tion=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=c914fc21c85a105051854cc5405ac734">Further information

Scientists oppose GM protein ingredient

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

Scientists at the Institute of Science in Society (Isis) are opposing approval of a genetically-modified fish protein which Unilever hopes to use in ice-cream products.

In a press statement, the scientists said that the success of Unilever's previous applications to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand was "unfortunate".

Unilever believes that its product, which is derived from a protein found in the blood of the ocean pout fish, is entirely safe but Isis scientists are concerned about the potential risks to health and safety.

"Unilever does not appear to have carried out the inflammation tests even though there is every indication from the scientific literature that pouter antifreeze protein is immunologically active," the statement said.

The scientists claim that Unilever only carried out "cursory studies" on allergenicity and say that this therefore puts the tens of millions of people that will consume the end ice-cream product at risk from allergic and other immune reactions.

"Even though allergenicity was studied in a cursory way, there is clear precedent for studying inflammation comprehensively in the long term in both young and older animals before exposing the European public to the transgenic ice-cream," the scientists concluded.

Further information

Non-dairy drinks increasingly popular in Europe

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

European sales of soya milk and other non-dairy drinks have been growing by over 20 per cent each year since the late 1990's.

Increasing consumer demand and a wealth of relevant product innovation have both contributed to growth in the category, according to a new report by Research and Markets.

The German market for non-dairy drinks has been particularly successful, although chilled soya drinks have been most popular in the UK, where the market has doubled every two years.

The European Market for Non-Dairy Drinks report also reveals that, although demand for non-dairy drinks initially came from lactose-intolerants, the drinks are increasingly being bought by a wider consumer base, by those seeking healthy alternatives to dairy.

A growing number of manufacturers have been launching own-label products to compete with those already on the market and many retailers have added chilled soya drinks, soya juice mixes

and rice drinks to their product ranges.

Further information

New recipes for acclaimed seafood range

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

Young's Seafood has announced the imminent launch of two new recipe chilled meals, according to media reports.

The Grimsby-based seafood company has made significant investments in developing new products in response to growing nationwide demand for fish and seafood, according to the Fish Update website.

A new selection of fish meals made from top quality seafood will soon be available, including a new Tuna & Pasta dish combining tuna flakes with Italian penne pasta and sweetcorn in a creamy cheddar sauce.

In addition, there will be an exotic new King Prawn Makhani â€“ a medium curry containing Columbian warm water prawns in a butter sauce with honey, coriander and spices.

James Turton, marketing director, told Fish Update: "Young's has broken the mould in chilled by proving that a quality brand can help to drive an own-label dominated market.

"These new ranges answer the twin consumer and retailer requirements for great taste plus longer shelf life, which we can now achieve without artificial additives by using new cooking technology," he revealed.

Further information

EU food giants adopt consistent nutrition labels

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 06

Story Text

Seven of the best-known food and drink companies in the EU have released a joint statement, confirming that they will label their products for nutritional content.

Coca-Cola, Danone, Kellogg, Kraft Foods, Nestle, PepsiCo and Unilever have all agreed to place labels on the front of their food packaging, informing consumers about the number of calories included in each product and the percentage of recommended daily calorie intake that figure represents.

The decision has been prompted by the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries, which recently released voluntary labelling guidelines, according to Reuters.

The statement said that the companies had welcomed the guidelines and encouraged other European companies to adopt the system "to promote consistent nutrition labelling and information for consumers".

"Nutritional information can be difficult to understand and the companies believe that this approach will be genuinely effective in getting complex messages across in an easily understood way," the companies said.

As well as calorie information on the front of packaging, the companies will also list eight key nutrients on the back, as well as guideline daily amounts for fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt, in order to help consumers make dietary choices.

[Further information](http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=healthNews&storyID=2006-07-12T174508Z_01_COL263872_RTRIDST_0_HEALTH-NUTRITION-LABELS-DC.XML)

Food additive set for widespread EU approval

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 06

Story Text

The European Commission's Council of Health Ministers has finalised the approval process for the use of erythritol as a food additive.

EU member states now have up to 18 months to approve the sugar alcohol's use in food products, although it cannot be used in drinks or baby foods.

Thomas Strack, product manager at InnoSweet, commented: "The food approval of erythritol as an additive allows food producers to use a novel ingredient with virtually no calories, but which gives body and mouthfeel."

Mr Strack said that the food industry has been waiting for such a product for a long time.

"We are sure that, with the help of our team of application experts, we can assist our customers to develop new concepts and create new products and growth opportunities," he added.

Erythritol has already been approved in Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands and is suitable for use in baking and as a sweetener in low-carbohydrate products.

[Further information](http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=11482&fSite=AO545&next=3)

Organic gels could be used as preservatives

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 06

Story Text

US researchers have developed new organic gel nanomaterials that could be used to encapsulate food products and act as a preservative.

Scientists at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the oldest technological institute in the US, added an enzyme to chemically activate a sugar, changing liquids into organic gels.

Jonathan Dordick, professor of chemical and biological engineering at the institute, said that the research uses nature's "building blocks" to create new nanomaterials that are both reversible and

environmentally benign.

"The importance of this finding is the ability to use the same naturally occurring enzyme both to create chemically functional organogels and to reverse the process and break down these gels into their biologically compatible building blocks," the professor explained.

"We are finding the natural world has provided tools to create these materials without the need to generate new compounds that may be harmful to the body or environment," he added.

Professor Dordick revealed that the materials could be used as preservatives for food, as well as to create delivery systems for pharmaceuticals.

[Further information](http://news.rpi.edu/update.do)

Strawberry vodka joins company's fruity offerings

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 06

Story Text

Strawberry Bank Liqueurs has finally decided to be true to its name, adding a strawberry liqueur to its range of beverages.

The Cumbrian firm, which is based at Crossthwaite, near Kendal, has now launched its Strawberry Vodka, which it believes makes the perfect summer cocktail, according to the News and Star.

The drink is made from local strawberries, sugar and vodka and is described by the Cumbria Foods website as "a delightful pink drink for the taste of summer all year round".

Helen Walsh, who runs the company along with husband, Mike, commented: "It seemed crazy, given our name, that we didn't have a strawberry drink in the range.

"Our Strawberry Vodka is refreshing as a long drink, creates a lovely summer cocktail and can be used in food as well," she revealed.

The new beverage is available in bottles ranging from 20cl to 50cl, costing between £4.20 and £8.10 depending on volume.

Strawberry Vodka joins the company's other products which include Damson Gin, Sloe Gin, Blackberry Gin and Blackberry Liqueur.

[Further information](http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/familylife/viewarticle.aspx?id=388510)

New metal detectable labels and tags

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 06

Story Text

A new range of labels and tags has been unveiled which can be spotted by metal detectors during the food production process.

The Detectamet range of metal detectable labels and tags has been launched by E-Components

and Chains of Pocklington and has been developed specifically for the food and pharmaceutical industries.

Small traces of label and tag fragments can now be detected at any stage of the production process, enabling processors to reduce the chance of contamination.

The labels and tags are available in a wide range of colours, enabling food companies to create their own bespoke designs.

In addition, the Detectamet products are so versatile that it is possible to add information, either by printer or by hand.

The new products should help to ensure that food items are free from contamination prior to delivery to customers, as well as providing companies with complete traceability, as production and batch information can be printed onto the tags.

[Further information](http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/epo/epo125.html)

Friends import Laotian beer into UK

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 06

Story Text

Two friends have launched a south-east Asian beer into the UK on-trade, after discovering it while travelling.

Alex Mervart and James Morgan were visiting Laos when they discovered Beer Lao, according to the Publican, and decided to set up a company to import and distribute the beverage.

The premium rice beer is brewed from a unique blend of European and Laotian ingredients, including hand-picked indigenous rice varieties, Himalayan spring water, Hallertau hops, German yeast and French malted barley.

"We did some research while we were in the country and everyone said it was the best beer around," Mr Mervart told the Publican.

"We were very clear we wanted to control the supply chain. We are targeting top end bars and south-east Asian restaurants at first but we will soon be looking to get it into pubs," he added.

Their new company, Milestonepoint, has obtained an exclusivity deal with the brewery in Laos and is already looking to extend its portfolio, possibly importing brands from small breweries in Europe.

[Further information](http://www.beerlao.co.uk)

Automated online system for food traceability

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

A new online system should help companies to trace food ingredients and products from their source to the moment they are sold to the consumer.

The system was developed by Scottish software company TraceAll in collaboration with food process control company Qmach and allows customers to obtain real-time information about products from anywhere around the globe, according to the Fish Update website.

TraceAll director Alan Steele revealed that the company already lists Dairy Crest, Greggs and the Food Standards Agency among its customers.

"Fast and resource-efficient ingredient and product traceability is increasingly becoming of paramount importance to food manufacturers around the world, especially in the area of product recall," he told Fish Update.

"As Europe's leading supplier of food traceability software, we are delighted to announce this partnership with Qmach, a leading supplier of food safety process control and compliance services, to assist our clients in better achieving their objectives."

Mark Fuller, business development director at Qmach, added that recent events such as the controversy over the Sudan 1 food ingredient and the recall of various Cadbury products have highlighted the inadequacy of out-dated paper-based systems.

[Further information](http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/4896/New_online_system_provides_supply_chain_traceability.html)

MS sufferers value new cannabis drink

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

Members of a therapy group have been trialling a new functional health drink which contains cannabis, recently launched in the UK by Thurella.

The Milton Keynes Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Group has been testing the cannabis tea, C-Ice, for three months to see if it helps to relieve some of the symptoms associated with the condition.

There is a growing amount of anecdotal evidence surrounding the ability of cannabis to alleviate symptoms of MS and many sufferers have been using it for years.

Roz Heredia, managing director of the charity, told Milton Keynes Today that the drink made them feel "so much better".

"It helped relieve leg pains, muscle spasms and it was wonderful for insomnia," she said, adding that the iced tea beverage is an excellent and tasty way of taking cannabis.

"It doesn't make you feel stoned," she revealed, "but without a doubt it does make you feel better."

C-Ice has only recently been launched in the UK and contains legal amounts of cannabis syrup, with the psychoactive substance, THC, having been removed.

The beverage also contains water, sugar, lemon and black tea extract.

[Further information](http://c-icetea.com)

Chocolate bar claims to improve acne

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

The growing list of functional foods has now expanded even further, with the launch of a chocolate bar that claims to clear up acne.

Borba, a beauty company which specialises in edible skin care products and beauty power drinks, has unveiled its Chocolate Clarifying Bar, which is said to contain a powder that eliminates toxins.

The chocolate reportedly contains "skin balance clarifying aqua-less crystalline powder" which helps the skin to regenerate itself, removes toxins and improves skin clarity.

According to the Toronto Fashion Monitor, the chocolate also contains acai, the wonder-berry which is said to contain twice as many antioxidants as blueberries, as well as green tea, which helps to strengthen the capillaries and reduce irritation.

In addition, the 100 per cent organic fat-free chocolate is free from artificial preservatives, flavourings and colours.

The global functional foods market has recently been thriving, with rapid growth expected to continue over the next few years, and is expected to comprise around five per cent of total food expenditure in the developed world by 2010.

[Further information](http://www.borba.net)

Consumers ignore excessive allergy warnings

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

Wide-spread use of labels warning consumers about possible cross-contamination with allergens is devaluing the impact of warning labels, according to food experts.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has warned that labels containing advice such as "may contain nuts" are now used so widely that consumers are no longer able to assess the risk level and are being confused by the system.

In many cases, says the agency, the labels are simply being ignored.

Sue Hattersley, head of the FSA's Food Allergy Branch, commented: "Up to 1.5 million people in the UK have food allergies, and it is vital that they are fully informed about the contents of the foods they are buying.

"Excessive use of warning labels about the possible presence of allergens can restrict consumer choice and devalue the impact of warning labels."

The FSA has released new guidelines to help food producers to improve their labelling systems and to make warnings easier to understand and interpret.

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

Nanotech food research gets funding boost

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

A new grant will help to boost research into the application of nanobiotechnology in the chilled and frozen food sector.

The University of Kent's Nanobiotechnology Research Group has been awarded over £800,000 from the European Commission to enable it to carry out research which will help to develop and integrate novel technologies to improve the safety and quality of food.

Nanobiotechnology is concerned with the biological application of materials which measure less than 100 nanometers.

Professor Peter Jeffries, head of the department of Biosciences, commented that the grant was a "significant addition" to the research group's funding.

"It typifies the exciting, multidisciplinary research that our department is leading," he said.

The research group's leader, Ian Bruce, said: "New materials and chemistry being developed at the University of Kent will significantly improve the efficiency of food testing for identity and therefore improve consumer confidence and choice."

[Further information](http://www.kent.ac.uk/news/stories/article-current.php?id=frozenfoodsuppliestobenefitfromanobiotechnology.txt)

Genes could help create food flavours

Date: Tue, 11 Jul 06

Story Text

Researchers are now able to accurately pinpoint those genes which create the individual flavours found in fruit and flowers.

The research technology could be used to revolutionise the way in which foods are created, enabling producers to develop synthetic solutions to mimic nature's flavours.

Dr Richard Newcomb, a member of New Zealand's HortResearch Industrial Biotechnology, explained that manufacturers have previously copied natural tastes either through a chemical synthesis process or by extraction from harvested raw ingredients.

However, neither approach is ideal, according to Dr Newcomb. Chemical synthesis uses up fossil fuels and extraction is expensive and produces limited quantities of the product.

Researchers at HortResearch have now developed biofermentation techniques, which use the actual genes that plants use and therefore produce a flavour compound with the exact same molecular make-up.

"Now we have developed techniques that help determine which genes create each compound and how those compounds combine to create a flavour or fragrance," Dr Newcomb said.

He revealed that much of the information is used in the centre's fruit breeding programme, enabling researchers to rapidly identify new fruit varieties with desirable traits.

"However, it is also possible for us to isolate genes that produce desirable flavour and fragrance compounds for use in industrial biotechnology applications," he added.

[Further information](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2006-07/ka-sct071006.php)

New software improves microwave re-heated foods testing

Date: Mon, 10 Jul 06

Story Text

A new software product promises to help improve the quality of re-heated microwavable foods.

The E! 2602 Microdefrost Model project from Eureka aims to make meals more nutritious, safe and tastier by optimising heating and defrosting processes within microwave ovens - helping European firms to get high quality products to market quickly.

The modelling software looks at how food is defrosted and heated within the microwave and where the heat is transferred. Other software designed by the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology (SIK) is used to make heat distribution uniform.

It is hoped the software will be used by food producers to produce more products more quickly, while also proving important for manufacturers of microwave ovens - who can use the models to optimise their oven's designs.

"We developed product simulation software to predict microwave heating uniformity," said Birgitta Waeppling-Raaholt of SIK, which led the design process.

"This makes it possible to design the make-up of the food product - geometry, placement of different food components, packaging and so on - much faster and reduces experimental work."

[Further information](http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=11478&fSite=AO545&next=3)

'Breakthrough' on recycling plastic food packaging

Date: Mon, 10 Jul 06

Story Text

A "breakthrough" has been declared in the race to get recycled plastic containers on shop shelves.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) announced on Monday that Marks and Spencer, Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) and Boots had successfully completed year-long trials of

recycled PET (rPET), finding that the material meets commercial, technical and safety requirements.

The results could see rPET being used in food packaging across the UK, with both Marks and Spencer and CCE likely to continue to use the material.

WRAP hopes the news will help close the plastic recycling gap. While 30-40,000 tonnes of plastic is recycled each year, little ends up in UK packaging.

"This is a major breakthrough for plastics recycling in the UK," says Jennie Price, chief executive of WRAP.

"This type of commitment from major brand names signals a growth in demand for rPET, which will in turn stimulate UK recycling capacity and will also show consumers that there is a strong home market for the plastic they recycle helping to motivate them to recycle more."

[Further information](http://www.letsrecycle.com/materials/plastics/news.jsp?story=5817)

Automated bagging system packs 120 bags/min

Date: Mon, 10 Jul 06

Story Text

A new automated bagging system is being launched to handle the packing of both fresh and frozen meat, poultry, fish, snacks and pet foods.

Automated Packaging Systems is showcasing its new product, the FAS SPrint Bagging System, at this year's PPMA show, the annual showcase for processing and packaging machinery.

The system is capable of packing 120 bags per minute and is able to be operated in packaging environments which require daily wash-down procedures.

Constructed from corrosion-resistant, stainless steel, the system consists of a conveyor of pre-opened bags ready for loading.

Paul Hayden, the company's marketing manager, commented that the system was the ideal product to take the company into the food sector.

"Research has shown that FAS SPrint will help reduce labour costs by increasing productivity per operator up to eight times more than most manual load operations," he revealed.

"The new product introduction is available in Europe in Q1 2007," he added.

[Further information](http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/aua/aua126.html)

Wine mixer drink launches onto supermarket shelves

Date: Mon, 10 Jul 06

Story Text

Cinzano is launching a new wine mixer drink to appeal to 18 to 30-year-old women.

Spritzzz Up contains 14.5 per cent ABV and is designed to be combined with tonic water or lemonade and served with ice.

The drink will be available in two varieties, Fruity White and Cheeky Red, according to Checkout Magazine.

Karen Crowley, UK marketing manager, told Checkout Magazine: "We've looked at the market, done our research and believe there's a sizeable opportunity for a wine-based drink that you mix at home.

"Spritzzz Up offers a high quality alternative to RTDs [ready-to-drink beverages] or alcopops, with a more accessible taste and lighter style than conventional wine," she added.

The new drink will be available in 750ml bottles and is expected to retail at around Â£5.99, initially being available in Tesco, Thresher and Budgens stores.

Further information

Yorkshire Cider unveils inaugural offering

Date: Mon, 10 Jul 06

Story Text

A new Yorkshire-based enterprise is thought to be the first commercial cider production venture in the area.

Yorkshire Cider has taken three years to develop and is now available in both bottled and draught formats, according to the Yorkshire Post.

The medium dry, still cider contains 6.7 per cent ABV and is being sold at the brewery itself, as well as in delicatessens and farm shops.

Alex Smith, who set up the business, told the Yorkshire Post that he got the idea from a social enterprise scheme that picked apples which were not up to "table quality".

Mr Smith had collected tips from a number of established cider makers, as well as taking college courses on brewing.

He also hopes to extend his product range in the near future, with the addition of fresh fruit juices and a perry made from local Hesse pears.

Further information

Test-tube pork meat just years away

Date: Fri, 07 Jul 06

Story Text

Artificial pork meat, created in laboratories from pig stem cells, could be created within the next few years, according to scientists at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

The research represents the first attempt to mass-produce meat in this manner, although small quantities of muscle cells are regularly produced in Petri dishes for use in experiments.

Paul Kosnik, vice president of engineering at Tissue Genesis in Hawaii, commented: "All of the technology exists today to make ground meat products in vitro.

"We believe the goal of a processed meat product is attainable in the next five years if funding is available and the R&D is pursued aggressively."

The Dutch scientists, led by professor of meat sciences Henk Haagsman, hope to produce a form of minced meat which could be used in burgers, sausages and pizza toppings.

They are currently trying to identify those stem cells which will multiply the most in bioreactors.

[Further Information](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines06/0621-03.htm)

Innovation celebrated at packaging awards

Date: Fri, 07 Jul 06

Story Text

The Starpack packaging awards, held this week at London's Grosvenor House Hotel, showcased a number of innovative design concepts.

The prize for the best shelf-ready pack went to Taylowe, for its Options and Ovaltine packaging.

Designed to automate the fill and optimise labour, the packs are easy to replenish in-store and give easy access to the consumer, while maintaining presentation.

Sally Davis, a food and beverage buyer at Tesco, described the packaging as "best in class for sachets".

Meanwhile, the best flexible plastic innovation prize went to Excelsior Technologies' Zip 'n' Steam pouches, which feature an in-built pressure valve and re-sealable zip.

Heather Kendle, packaging board chair of the Institute of Packaging, commented: "Consumer concerns about convenience and sustainable packaging and retailer demands for a more proactive stance on packaging issues have been answered by many of this year's innovative entries."

Ms Kendle added that awarding only one Gold prize in each category meant that judges would provide a "benchmark" by which companies could assess their performance against the packaging elite.

[Further information](http://www.iom3.org/starpack/news/winners06_2.htm)

Organic milk brand gets new packaging

Date: Fri, 07 Jul 06

Story Text

The Welsh organic dairy co-operative Calon Wen is due to unveil new packaging for its branded

organic milk, designed to reflect the nature of the product.

The packaging emphasises the fact that the milk is pure, fresh and free from additives, much like the co-operative's Welsh name, which means "pure or white heart and soul", according to Farming UK.

Richard Tomlinson, chairman of Calon Wen, told Farming UK that the new brand would enable them to take full advantage of the growing consumer interest in organic milk.

"We like to think of ourselves as 'evolved and enlightened' farmers, taking control of our own destiny by getting closer to consumers through producing our own branded products, and so preserving farming for future generations," he said.

Mr Tomlinson explained that consumers are becoming far more interested in what their food contains and where it comes from.

He continued: "This has led to real success for our members who can offer complete traceability from the farm to the customer."

[Further information](http://www.farminguk.com/bsp/10130/ews.asp?DBID=103-281-013-042&iPage=1&id=4505)

Organic food market increases by 30%

Date: Fri, 07 Jul 06

Story Text

Sales of organic foods have increased by nearly a third over the last year in the UK, confirming reports that the public are actively seeking out organic produce.

Figures from the Soil Association's annual report on the state of the organic market, out today, have demonstrated the strong level of consumer and business confidence in the sector.

Organic sales totalled almost Â£1.6 billion, a figure which equates to around Â£7 million extra per week, and two out of three consumers now knowingly buy organic food.

The Soil Association's food and farming director, Helen Browning, said that the "staggering" growth figures were good news for UK organic producers.

"It is also greatly encouraging to see supermarkets responding to criticisms by increasing their sourcing of home-grown produce," she added.

Ms Browning warned that it was now vital to make sure that organic standards are not diluted as a result of companies putting profits before principles.

"The Soil Association and other organic bodies must be vigilant to ensure public trust in the integrity and values of organic food and farming is sustained," she concluded.

[Further information](http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/89D058CC4DBEB16D80256A73005A2866/5DA0D7A40C3CF261802571A4002D9FAD?OpenDocument)

Miniature Baby Ava strawberries unveiled

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

Angus Soft Fruits has launched a new baby strawberry, ideal for encouraging children to eat the recommended amount of fruit.

The new baby Ava strawberries are miniature versions of the full size Ava fruit, which are rapidly becoming known for their sweet flavour and juicy, aromatic characteristics.

According to the company, the strawberries are notable for their "fruity aroma, white petals and perfect heart shapes".

The original Ava strawberries were launched just last year and have already proven to be one of the most popular varieties on sale in the UK.

However, the smaller variety should be even more appealing to youngsters and celebrity chef Nick Nairn has already thrown his support behind the brand.

Mr Nairn commented: "Ava strawberries are just superb. They look great, taste fantastic and grow right here in Scotland.

"But I always find that the ultimate taste testers are my children, and they love Ava. In fact, it's the only strawberry that they are guaranteed to eat."

[Further information](http://www.avastrawberry.com/index.asp)

SA wine producer unveils new range

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

South African wine brand Boschendal is launching a new range of wines onto the UK market.

The new wines will be launched under the 1685 label which, according to Checkout Magazine, was originally unveiled in 1985 to commemorate 300 years of winemaking.

Boschendal is one of the oldest wine properties in South Africa, originally founded by French settlers and, although the company embraces new advancements and technologies, it remains proud of its Huguenot heritage.

The wine producer therefore combines state-of-the-art cellar equipment with the traditional craft and skill associated with the time-honoured art of wine-making.

The new range will consist of three single varietals – sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and shiraz.

In addition, there will be a chardonnay and pinot noir blend and a shiraz and cabernet sauvignon dual varietal.

The range will retail at £7.99, according to Checkout magazine, and will be available in a number of leading grocers and specialist wine retailers.

Further information

Low-alcohol beer on Foster's menu

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

A low-alcohol version of Foster's is being trialled, as brewery S&NUK attempts to create a range of beverages to cater for all consumer groups.

A draught format of the two per cent ABV lager, Foster's Quench, is being trialled across the UK, with around 30 pubs participating in the pilot roll-out.

Nigel Pollard, head of public relations, told the Morning Advertiser: "We want to make sure that we have a product for every occasion so, at any one time, we will be testing a number of products."

Mr Pollard revealed that low-alcohol and alcohol-free beers would increasingly become a focus for the company, with consumers becoming more aware of their alcohol intake.

"To ally that to a trusted brand is potentially very exciting," he said. "But we know low-alcohol beers have failed in the past, so we need to carry out research."

The company has recently been developing a number of new products, including Foster's Twist – a lager brewed with citrus hops to give a hint of lime.

Further information

India's food processors eye global expansion

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

The Indian minister for food processing, Subodh Sahai, has had discussions with British companies in a bid to expand the food processing sector.

Mr Sahai is reported to have met with British retailers, including Tesco and Waitrose, to discuss India's role in the future of food processing, according to Reuters.

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and is the largest producer of milk and tea.

The nation is also a key producer of fruit, vegetables, rice, wheat, spices and cotton.

"The UK, the US they are processing 80 per cent, 70 per cent, 75 per cent (of food), whereas India is processing just seven per cent so the sky is the limit for this," the minister told Reuters.

"After IT (information technology) and BT (biotechnology), the age of FT (food technology) has come."

India has recently begun to certify its organic production and, according to Mr Sahai, is getting "a lot of enquiry" about organic foods.

Further information

Techs identify ideal package films for fresh produce

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

Food technologists at the US Agricultural Research Service (ARS) have identified specific packaging wraps which lengthen the shelf life of a number of fruit and vegetable varieties.

Team leader Yaguang Luo, a member of the Produce Quality and Safety Laboratory, studied modified atmosphere packaging in order to develop the right balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide for particular varieties of fresh-cut produce.

Ms Luo told Agricultural Research magazine: "Fresh-cut fruits and vegetables are alive, and different varieties respire at different rates.

"It is critical to match the right oxygen permeation level to the respiration rate of the particular produce being wrapped," Ms Luo explained.

"With lettuce, for example, if the oxygen transmission rate of the package film is too high, it will cause the product to brown. If it is too low, it will cause decay."

Ms Luo has now succeeded in identifying suitable package films for a number of fresh produce items, including romaine and iceberg lettuce, carrots, salad savoy and cilantro.

Further information

Super-size blackberries on sale in M&S

Date: Thu, 06 Jul 06

Story Text

Giant blackberries, which are almost certainly the largest in the world, are going on sale in Marks & Spencer.

The "king" blackberries are originally from New Zealand, although the M&S berries are being grown in Kent, and are twice the size of regular berries, measuring up to 4cm in length.

According to the Mirror, they will be available this month for £2.49 per 150g.

Emmett Lunny, a spokeswoman for M&S, told the Mirror: "It has a fantastic sweet taste â€“ it just melts in your mouth."

Ms Lunny added that demand for unusual fruit is particularly high, as consumers are increasingly seeking out healthy foods to snack on.

Blackberries are proving particularly popular, perhaps because of claims about the health benefits conferred by their antioxidant properties.

As a result, the retailer is expecting to sell out of British blackberries over the summer months and has planted both early and late varieties to try and extend the season and thereby meet demand for the fruit.

Further information

Whiskies get youthful revamp

Date: Wed, 05 Jul 06

Story Text

Two of Spencerfield Spirit Company's whiskies are about to be re-launched in the UK, having undergone a packaging and reformulation revamp.

The two products to have gone back to the drawing board are Sheep Dip and Pig's Nose, both of which will hopefully now be more appealing to younger drinkers, according to just-drinks.com.

Sheep Dip is a blend of single malts and is expected to retail at Â£23.00, while Pig's Nose is a blended Scotch with an expected price tag of Â£17.99.

Alex Nicol, managing director of Spencerfield, told the website: "We are developing interesting, small brands with big personalities for customers who are disdainful of stuffy, pompous and over-serious whiskies.

"They want quality, they want fun and they want a relationship with their brands," Mr Nicol revealed, adding that the brands would grow through a combination of recommendation and trial.

Further information

Brazilian Brahma beer goes sub-zero

Date: Wed, 05 Jul 06

Story Text

Coors' decision to serve up a sub-zero beer has clearly taken off, with InBev destined to follow suit with its own super-chilled offering.

According to the just-drinks website, the brewery is set to roll out sub-zero chillers for its Brazilian beer, Brahma, which will enable the beer to be served at -5 degrees Celsius.

Steve Kitching, managing director of on-trade sales at InBev UK, told just-drinks: "In Brazil, Brahma is always enjoyed 'estupidamente gelade' or 'incredibly cold', maximising refreshment and product quality and we are now bringing this to the UK where a growing number of drinkers demand a cold beer.

"The sub-zero chiller guarantees ice-cold beer, giving consumers the reassurance of a quality

bottled beer every time. It gives Brahma an added boost following its strong performance in the on-trade since its launch last year."

The cold version of the beer is likely to be available later this month, following a successful trial in Scotland which saw sales increase by 50 per cent.

[Further information](http://www.just-drinks.com/article.aspx?id=86989&clk=s)

Cholesterol-lowering rice gets marketing push

Date: Wed, 05 Jul 06

Story Text

The nutraceutical industry has taken a step forward with the marketing of pre-cooked rice which claims to help lower cholesterol.

Japanese rice company Sato Foods has begun an online marketing campaign for its product, which contains Eugene Science's patented cholesterol-lowering CZ(TM) ingredient.

Healthy Chol-Rice is thought to be the first pre-cooked rice product to contain added plant sterols and is being marketed as an ideal accompaniment for high-cholesterol foods such as meats or fried foods.

Sato Foods has launched an online shopping mall to market the product, via which it hopes to educate consumers about the rice's health benefits.

Seung Kwon Noh, chief executive officer of Eugene Science, told Genetic Engineering News: "Sato Foods' new online mall is another notable indicator that points to a worldwide shift in consumer health consciousness.

"Our patented CZ(TM) holds strong competitive advantage and we are pleased to see Sato Foods, a powerful marketing partner, increasing its marketing resources behind its CZ(TM) product," he added.

[Further information](http://www.genengnews.com/news/bnitem.aspx?name=3153246)

Fortified bread could improve health

Date: Wed, 05 Jul 06

Story Text

A study has revealed that fortification of bread with vitamin D could be good for consumer health.

Research conducted at the University of Maryland's Centre for Food, Nutrition and Agriculture Policy (CFNAP) has found that consumers who ate fortified whole wheat bread increased their vitamin D intake by ten per cent.

The vitamin helps the body to absorb and use calcium, a mineral which is necessary to maintain bone density and prevent osteoporosis.

Professor Maureen Storey, director of CFNAP, revealed that many older people do not consume

the recommended amount of vitamin D, while females' diets generally lack calcium.

"We found that fortification of whole grain breads has a small impact on overall calcium and vitamin D consumption but among those who do consume whole grain breads the fortification leads to about a ten per cent increase in vitamin D consumption," she revealed.

"Broader fortification of grain products with calcium and vitamin D may have a larger impact," Professor Storey added.

The professor concluded that, while people should still strive for a healthy diet, dietary supplements and fortification could play an important role in addressing nutritional shortfalls.

[Further information](http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/scitech/release.cfm?ArticleID=1295)

Microwavable ready-to-drink coffee on the cards

Date: Wed, 05 Jul 06

Story Text

JavaVoo is preparing to launch a microwavable pressurised coffee cup which can brew coffee in just two minutes.

The Micro-Brew Personal Barista takes just 120 seconds to prepare a ready-to-drink cup of espresso or latte, according to Piranet.

The company is currently mass-producing the product in preparation for its US launch, which should take place in the next five or six months, after which it hopes to roll the technology out across Europe.

The Micro-Brew is reported to replicate the pressure-brewing process found in an espresso machine and consists of two chambers, one containing water and the other containing the coffee.

The water heats up and is then released into the chamber containing the coffee, resulting in a ready-to-drink beverage.

As well as launching its own brand of coffee, the company plans to licence the technology out to other companies and has even received queries regarding the technology's suitability for organic herbal drinks and medicinal purposes.

Robert Vu, chief executive officer of JavaVoo, told Piranet that the only way to obtain a herbal extract such as ginseng at present is to brew the herb in a clay pot.

"A person can get the same extract by placing the herb in the pressurised cup," he revealed.

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

Nunwood to research new drinks potential for Britvic

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

Britvic is investing in research with a view to developing a new range of soft drinks.

The UK soft drinks manufacturer has appointed Nunwood to conduct product and concept testing for the new range, which it hopes will boost flagging sales after this year's profit warnings.

Profits for the first half of 2006 were just Â£6.5 million after tax, compared to Â£9.6 million for the same period during 2005.

Laura Morris, senior client consultant from Nunwood, commented: "This is a fantastic opportunity for Nunwood and we are delighted to be working with Britvic in their quest to deliver innovative new drinks."

Nunwood has a proven track record in helping clients to identify and exploit profit opportunities and its research for Britvic should help to determine consumer response to different product and packaging combinations in a variety of different drinking environments.

It should also give valuable insight into current UK drinking behaviours.

[Further information](http://www.nunwood.com/pressnewsjuly2.htm)

FSA unveils draft temperature control guidelines

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

New guidelines are being drawn up to provide advice on temperature control legislation, following recent changes to European food hygiene regulations.

Responding to the new legislation, which replaced the original regulations on January 1st 2006, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has now issued a draft version of guidelines.

The guidance is designed to complement best practice in the food industry, according to the FSA, and helps to explain the new food temperature control requirements to food businesses and enforcement authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Included in the guidelines are instructions on which types of food need to be stored under temperature control, guidance on when a degree of flexibility is allowed, and advice on keeping foods below the legal maximum in order to provide additional assurances of food safety.

The FSA will not be holding a formal consultation; however, it is inviting views on the draft guidelines prior to publication.

[Further information](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/tempcontroldraft.pdf)

Cambodian delicacy an arachnophobe's nightmare

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

Although food producers are constantly looking for innovative new products and food sources, the chances are that it will be a while before any are brave enough to introduce one particular Cambodian delicacy onto the UK market.

The current seasonal treat in the town of Skuon is fried tarantula – often seasoned with a little garlic, salt and chillies, although some customers purchase live spiders to add to their rice wine.

According to ITV News, street vendors can often be seen carrying loaded plates of the delicacy, the best examples of which are apparently collected from underground burrows and pan-fried until the skin has turned red-brown.

Chin Sarath, a 20-year-old who has been selling tarantulas for seven years, told ITV News: "Buyers say spiders are good and they say that they can cure diseases. Some people buy up to a hundred of them, even the whole tray."

The now popular food evolved out of necessity during the Khmer Rouge regime, when starvation forced many to resort to eating insects and spiders for food, and many people now believe that the spiders can cure a variety of ailments, including back pain and respiratory problems.

Further information

New test to authenticate olive oil

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

A new test has been developed which could help industry officials to detect adulterated and diluted virgin olive oils.

The test has been developed by Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association (CCFRA), the UK's largest independent organisation carrying out research for the global food and drinks industry.

There have long been concerns that the popularity and premium price of olive oil might be encouraging certain traders to dilute it with other less expensive oils, such as hazelnut oil.

Olive and hazelnut oils are chemically very similar, making it very difficult to tell them apart.

However, CCFRA has developed a method of extracting the DNA from the oil and detecting the presence of hazelnut-specific DNA.

Studies have found that 18 out of 19 oil samples were correctly identified, suggesting that the method is sensitive and accurate enough to perhaps also be used to authenticate other types of oil.

Further information

Phosphorescent fungi test developed

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

Researchers have developed a simple way to detect toxic fungi in contaminated food products.

A team of scientists at the University of Oviedo, Spain, have produced a test for *Aspergillus* fungi, some types of which produce aflatoxins which can be harmful to humans.

According to the RSC Chemical Technology supplement, researcher Alfredo Sanz-Medel said that the development of screening methods for the quick identification of these harmful strains is of great interest at present.

"This method provides a simpler and faster method for aflatoxin screening," he commented.

Existing tests require samples to be grown in a nutrient medium, requiring up to ten days to provide a result, and a lack of oxygen and the presence of metal atoms is required to obtain detectable fluorescence levels.

The new test relies on room-temperature phosphorescence (RTP) rather than fluorescence and therefore does not require such strict conditions. It also takes under two days to produce reliable results.

Further information

FSA seeks views on novel algal extract

Date: Tue, 04 Jul 06

Story Text

The Food Standards Agency has asked for views on the use of an algal extract in dietary supplements.

Cyanotech Corporation, which produces microalgae products for the nutritional supplement and food colouring markets, is hoping to sell an ingredient made from an extract of astaxanthin, a pigment found in the microalgae, *Haematococcus pluvialis*.

The microalgae is part of the natural diet of fish and crustaceans and is responsible for the pink colour of animals such as salmon and shrimp.

It has already been available in the European Union in capsule form for over ten years and the company is now seeking permission to sell an astaxanthin-rich extract from the microalgae, to be used in hard and soft gelatine capsules and tablets.

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP), an independent committee of scientists appointed by the Food Standards Agency, therefore requires views on the application in order to assess the extract's equivalence to the whole-algal product which is already on the market.

Further information

Czechs come up with novel use for beer

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

The world's first beer spa has been opened in the Czech town of Chodova Plana, providing an unusual - and arguably healthier - use for the beverage.

The town's beer is being marketed as a cure for a variety of ailments and the highlight of a trip to the spa is a 20 minute bathing session in a lukewarm solution of the region's dark beer, which is produced in the spa's brewery using mineral-rich local spring water.

The solution contains just two per cent alcohol to prevent bathers from becoming intoxicated by fumes and, although visitors are discouraged from sampling beer from the spa itself, they are more than welcome to enjoy an official pint while they soak.

The visit finishes with a 25-minute massage, again using oils made from beer.

Jarmela Cepakova, an executive at the spa, told the Scotsman: "There's no doubt that the spring water itself is good for you, but we are convinced that the beer-making process does add something.

"The brewery has been around for centuries and local doctors always said it was good for you. I have a single half-litre a day, for my health you understand," she added.

People tend to visit the spa to treat circulatory problems and skin illnesses and for general wellbeing.

[Further information](http://news.scotsman.com/international.cfm?id=964862006)

Annual report highlights Heinz commitment to innovation

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

Heinz has issued its annual shareholders report, which focuses on the company's food product innovation.

Entitled Growth Through Innovation, the report looks at the new products to emerge from the Heinz stable over the last year, as well as some of the key individuals who are driving the company forward.

William R. Johnson, president and chief executive officer at Heinz, commented: "This year's report is dedicated to the talented men and women at the Heinz Innovation and Quality Centre and our other global development centres who are carrying on Heinz's unparalleled 'Pure Food' legacy."

The company's innovations have included a number of new product launches in key food categories and some ground-breaking packaging innovations, such as a new Fridge Door Fit ketchup bottle - a convenient, large-size bottle of Heinz's flagship brand.

The food giant plans to further increase investment in research and development over the next two years, making full use of its new, state-of-the-art Innovation Centre, which is staffed by over 100 chefs, food technologists, nutritionists, packaging engineers and quality assurance specialists.

[Further information](http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/index.jsp?epi-content=GENERIC&newsId=20060630005466&ndmHsc=v2*A113636160000*B1151962650)

000*DgroupByDate*J2*L1*N1000003*Zheinz&newsLang=en&beanID=2133606841&viewID=news_view">Further information

Diageo hopes new RTDs will reignite sector

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

International drinks group Diageo is hoping to give its sales a much-needed boost with the launch of new ready-to-drink (RTD) products, both in the UK and North America.

The market for RTD beverages, widely known as alcopops, has dwindled in recent years, not helped by criticism by police and health officials over their supposed impact on under-age binge drinking.

Diageo is hoping that its new additions will help to reignite the RTD market in the UK, where increased regulation and a subdued consumer environment have impacted negatively on alcohol sales.

The drinks group has launched new variants of Smirnoff Twisted V and Twist, a new range of Parrot Bay beverages and a number of tequila-based Cuervo flavours in the US, according to Life Style Extra.

In addition, it recently launched a fruit-fermented alcoholic drink, Quinns, and a bourbon-based RTD called Slate 20 in the UK.

Diageo believes that the new drinks will be well received and will help to add impetus to the once-popular sector.

Further information

Brighton inspires alcohol-free sparkling wine

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

A new alcohol-free sparkling wine is being added to a web-based company's own-brand range.

The Alcohol-Free Shop, an online beverage company, has unveiled Brighton Bubbly, which it hopes will appeal to party-goers who want an enjoyable, alcohol-free time.

The unique, semi-dry wine is produced in Germany using traditional wine making methods, removing the alcohol but preserving the flavour of the wine.

The alcohol is filtered out of the wine after the aging process, reducing its content to around 0.1 to 0.2 per cent, the same sort of levels as are commonly found in unfermented grape, orange and tomato juices.

In keeping with the wine's name, the label features a piece of unique locally-inspired artwork by artist Colin Moore.

Entitled Brighton Beach 2, the original print features the pier and deck chairs and captures the typical feel of the resort.

The company's John Risby explained: "We wanted a name for our wine that would show that you can drink it and still stay bright and alert. We decided to call the wine Brighton Bubbly and Colin's painting was perfect for our label."

Further information

Drinks range targets specific health needs

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

Infuzions is launching its new Zipp range of fruit-based drinks this month, aimed at attracting consumers with specific health concerns.

The drinks are a blend of natural ingredients, anti-oxidants and essential vitamins and minerals and, with no more than 35 calories per bottle, are being marketed as a tasty and healthy alternative to other sugar-rich soft drinks.

According to mad.co.uk, there are two distinct strands to the Zipp products. The Slenderize range helps to curb the appetite and burn fat, while the Vitalize range contains essential vitamins, folic acid and green tea extract and helps to maintain a healthy immune system.

Packaging for the new brand has been designed and created by Parker Williams Design, which has taken the brand name, Zipp, as the focal point for its logo, representing the release of fruit and freshness from the bottle.

The range will include six flavours and is expected to retail at Â£1.19 per 500ml bottle.

Further information

New flavours for Schweppes mixers

Date: Mon, 03 Jul 06

Story Text

Coca-Cola is adding two new tonic flavours to its Schweppes soft drinks range, which can either be drunk on their own or combined with spirits.

The new flavours will be pomegranate and juniper and will be part of the biggest investment in the soft drink range since Coca-Cola bought the brand in 1999, according to the Publican.

In addition, the company is launching a new aromatic mixer called Russchian, which is designed to be mixed with vodka.

Cathryn Sleight, marketing director for Coca-Cola GB, told the Publican: "Schweppes is a fantastic brand and this year sees Coca-Cola GB put a huge investment behind it, our biggest

since we acquired the brand seven years ago.

"With the introduction of new products we believe Schweppes is in a great position to evolve from being the ultimate mixer specialist into the definitive adult soft drinks brand for 30-somethings," she said.

The market for soft drinks has been growing in recent years, with recent figures showing that the percentage of pub drinkers who do not buy alcohol has doubled since 1990.

<a

href="http://www.thepublican.com/story.asp?sectioncode=7&storycode=52190&c=1"

>Further information