

FOODSERVICE

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FOOTPRINT



DEFRA'S FOOD SOURCING DEBACLE

What does it say about procurement in the public sector?

AGRICULTURE ABROAD

Footprint Forum looks at our reliance on international producers

JUNK POLICY

Caterers concerned at moves to push fatty foods and cut school catering costs

RAISING POTATO'S PROFILE:

Why the spud needs a facelift

PAST THEIR SELL BY DATE:

New report suggests ethical labels are old news

LOUD AND CLEAR:

What can be learned from the green marketing experts?



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Comment...

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Red-faced or green? The choice is yours.

THE FACT the Government has failed to meet a sustainability target is not surprising (page 8). This is a government that has gone from "the greenest ever" to red-faced. Who can forget the Chancellor's attack on environmental measures in October: "We're not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business."

It's also no secret that Defra, the Government's lead department on sustainability, wields little power in Whitehall. The food buying standards that it is failing to meet are meant to be met by all central departments, but the Minister in charge, Jim Paice, is believed to be struggling to wrest any information from colleagues across government. Have all other caterers been made aware of all the standards, for example? Who knows? What we do know is that in the current climate, price is king. As one caterer put it at a Footprint Forum earlier this year: "We haven't ever gained or lost a job based on our sustainability – it often comes down to price."

This could have been a factor in Defra's decision to change caterers earlier this year. Ironically, had it stayed with BaxterStorey, it would "be meeting the majority of criteria in the new standards including that for fish", according to Sustain.

But the fact Defra, and thus Eures, is not meeting what appear relatively weak standards (McDonald's has much stronger standards in certain areas of sustainability) is not the only concern. There is also the strange dynamic apparent between a customer with a huge public spending budget (Defra) and its caterer. The idea



David Burrows

Foodservice Footprint
Editor-in-Chief

that Defra has forgotten it is a customer and can lay down demands is concerning. Even more so that it doesn't appear to understand them. The fish standard is simple: don't buy any fish on the Marine Conservation Society's 'fish to avoid' list, and buy only fish on its 'fish to eat' list or that which has been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

In January, Defra should publish an update on how it's doing. It's unlikely that it'll be able to convince any other departments to, but perhaps caterers should push the agenda? There's a good news story here for those that are hitting the standards – many of whom don't shout enough about their progress (page 20). These standards are supposed to set an example for hospitals and schools too, as well as the public. Is this the chance for the foodservice sector to take the bull by the horns and lead where the Government has failed? Let's not be left red-faced; let's show our true colour: green.



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Beyond the cup

THE NESCAFÉ PLAN

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This month's contributors



Sally Uren

What will consumers be like in 2020? Sally Uren, deputy chief executive at Forum for the Future, takes a look into her crystal ball (with the help of the Forum's new report). Forum for the Future is a non-profit organisation that works globally with business and government to create a sustainable future.



Joe Fernandez

Many of the consumer-facing companies in foodservice have done a great job of 'selling' stories about their sustainability actions and aspirations. But what about the contract caterers? Joe Fernandez delves into the world of marketing your sustainability. Joe is a freelance business journalist, having worked as news editor for Marketing Week and deputy editor of Pitch. He has also worked for Reuters, The Times and The Independent covering food & drink, telecoms and IT.

Ethical labels no longer hot stuff

By David Burrows

SUSTAINABILITY LABELS used to certify products such as coffee, tea and chocolate cannot deliver sufficient business value or drive the level of consumer demand needed to develop a sustainable economy.

Although a “brilliant initiative for its time”, the ethical label should now “fade into the background”, according to a new report by the independent think tank, SustainAbility.

Sponsored by the likes of Starbucks and Mars, ‘Signed, Sealed... Delivered?’ assessed the value and challenges that businesses find in using certification and labelling schemes, before concluding that while they have done much to push the sustainability agenda, they could be past their sell-by date.

“In theory an organisation like Fairtrade should be trying to put itself out of business,” development director Geoff Kendall told Foodservice Footprint.

Kendall said the future will be about open standards that everyone has to adhere to and everyone can contribute to rather than a plethora of ethical labels. This will involve collaboration within the business sector which was not “beyond the realms of possibility”, he said.

“The global brands that exist today have got where they are because they are experts at influencing consumer behaviour. If we can channel that towards sustainability then we will get a lot further than one label will ever get us.”

However, those representing some of the biggest certification schemes have defended their role in today’s society.

“All our research shows that the public do not trust companies on the sustainability agenda and do look for independent third party certification as the best way to verify a product’s ethical claims,” said Fairtrade Foundation executive director, Harriet Lamb.

Mercedes Tallo, global director for the Rainforest Alliance argued that ethical labels retain their relevance to the consumer. “It is the coming together of business and third party certification schemes which have transformed the sustainability agenda. It is brands, with their creative brains and big marketing spends, that have the greatest opportunity to transform consumer behaviour, but when it is combined with the endorsement of a [credible] third party, their message becomes even more powerful.”



Warning over illegal eggs

THE EU’S first ever legislation designed to improve animal welfare might not be worth the paper it’s written on.

From January 1, barren battery cages – those that don’t allow hens to carry out natural behaviours such as foraging and stretching of wings – will be banned as part of the Welfare of Laying Hens Directive.

However, after 12 years of haggling and heel-dragging, there are still 12 Member States, including Spain, Italy, Greece and Poland, that will not be compliant with the Directive.

The European Commission has ruled out legislation to enforce the ban on free trade grounds, leaving producers in some countries free to sell cheaper battery eggs – much of it as liquid and powder – across the EU. This could put UK producers, which have spent millions getting ready for the ban, at a competitive disadvantage and result in UK consumers eating ‘illegally produced’ eggs.

“The EU Commission proposes that illegal eggs, that fail to comply with the improved animal welfare requirements set out in the Directive, can still be used by food and non-food manufacturers, either in the Member State of origin or elsewhere under bilateral agreements,” said Anne McIntosh MP, chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

“It is also unacceptable that UK consumers will not know whether processed foods, restaurant meals, fast food or even shampoo that they buy contain eggs that do not comply with the new animal welfare regulations for caged hens.”

The British Egg Industry has estimated that 84 million hens across the EU will still be in the illegal cages by the New Year. Compassion in World Farming is urging consumers to ask whether the eggs in products are British and cage-free.



Palm oil buyers not yet out of the woods

WWF HAS analysed the performance of some of the world’s major buyers of palm oil and found that they are still not doing enough to source sustainable products. This has left tropical forests in Borneo and Malaysia, and species like the urang-utan, still very much threatened. WWF’s second ‘palm oil scorecard’ shows that less than half the palm oil sourced by the companies assessed is certified as sustainable. The “relatively good” performance of UK companies was noted, however. Companies using substantial volumes of palm oil—more than 100,000 tonnes per year—have generally performed well in the Scorecard, with household names such as Nestlé and Unilever scoring strongly.

26,000 more readers...



FOODSERVICE FOOTPRINT registered a record circulation with its special edition on waste. An extra 26,000 magazines were printed as the magazine partnered with Unilever Food Solutions and 3663 on tackling the waste issue in foodservice. "There is a voluntary agreement on its way and we all need to be involved in developing it," said

Footprint Media Group MD Charlie Miers. "We will be keeping the waste debate alive throughout 2012, starting with our 'Waste Watch' section in the magazine and on the new website. We're also planning a live webinar with the main industry associations for foodservice operators and there's a new waste category in next year's Awards."

Waste agreement proposals

THE FOODSERVICE industry could have to reduce its food and packaging waste by 5% within four years under proposals published by the Waste and Resources Action Programme. The percentage of food and packaging waste recycled, composted or sent to anaerobic digestion will also have to rise from 47% to 70%.

If delivered, the targets will see 418,000 tonnes less waste going to landfill and save businesses £76m. Any size of business will be able to sign up to the agreement, but first the industry has been asked to feed back on the proposals by 11 January, 2012.

More details are available on the WRAP website: www.wrap.org.uk/hospitality.

Correction



On page 38 in the last issue we stated that Stephen Kinkead is Winterhalter marketing development manager; he is actually managing director. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Waste Watch

In association with



THE FOODSERVICE and waste sectors need to help consumers recycle more takeaway cups, according to Which?. More than 50% of consumers who buy takeaway drinks chuck them in the general waste, said the consumer group, while many who do recycle them may be contaminating waste streams because of the coating on the paper cups. Which? senior home researcher, Lisa Galliers, said: "The coffee chains we spoke to varied in their response to the problem. Starbucks is aiming for 100% of its cups to be recyclable or reusable by 2015. But while some of their actions are heading in the right direction, other coffee chains think it's enough to stick a logo on the cup and hope we'll know what to do. I think more clarification is needed."

Help could be on the horizon as Solo Cup Europe becomes the latest packaging manufacturer to back the re-energised Save-A-Cup campaign. "There is a clear need

for a scheme that is easy to implement," said Anne Sutton, vice president for the environment. "We know that consumers are often confused about what to do with their used cups and this scheme gives reassurance that the cups reach the best possible end of life by actually being recycled."

Meanwhile, in food waste news, the Sustainable Restaurant Association has launched its 'Too good to waste' campaign, encouraging diners to take leftovers home with them. The SRA will produce **25,000 biodegradable doggy boxes** for early adopters and restaurants that sign up during the campaign. The Scots are probably eyeing up the so-far London-centric campaign enviously, given new proposals just released under Scotland's Zero Waste Regulations, which will mean that by 2013 Scottish food businesses will have to segregate food waste (2015 for those



with less than 49 employees). Councils are being ordered to offer **better collection services for food waste** in the same timescale. For more on all these stories, see www.foodservicefootprint.com.

Defra in the dock over sustainable sourcing



Jim Paice has been left with egg on his face after his department failed to meet its own buying standards on food procurement. With the angry Minister promising immediate action, *David Burrows* asks whether the Government really has an appetite for sustainable food?

IT'S NOT the first time a Minister has been left red-faced on Radio 4, and it won't be the last. "I'd hoped that we would be setting the pace and I am genuinely very angry, and we've taken this up with our contractors and everything will be put right shortly."

By the time you read this it will be almost six weeks since Jim Paice was left squirming on the Farming Today programme after his department, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), was found to be falling short of its own buying standards on food procurement. At the time he was, undoubtedly, peeved, suggesting that if he had any hair left he'd be pulling it out if this happened again.

But is the Minister, or indeed the Government, really losing any sleep, or hair, over the food it buys? Or, for that matter, is the contractor in question, Eurest, which is part of the Compass Group and has a £12.5m contract to supply Defra? Are we really to believe that sustainability is a top priority for central government when it selects its contract caterers?

"Defra doesn't know what it's doing," says Alex Jackson, project officer at Sustain. Jackson has responsibility for the 'Public Money for Public Good' campaign, which is focused on the procurement of sustainable food in the public sector. "This is further proof that – despite the rhetoric – Government is not prioritising sustainability when it comes to buying food with taxpayers' money," he says.

There was plenty of tough talk in the aftermath of the findings, with Paice adamant that the buying standards are not "optional extras" and promising to ensure this is "sorted out immediately". Compass, meanwhile, has remained tight-lipped – as has much of the industry. Compass did, however, release one statement which referred to its "support" of the standards and its place as "the largest supporter of Fairtrade in the UK foodservice industry".

Sourcing Fairtrade food is one of the 16 buying standards the caterer met – in fact it exceeded the target by sourcing 100% Fairtrade tea and Rainforest Alliance coffee (the target was 50%). It's the two standards that it isn't meeting that have got the likes of Radio 4 and Jackson interested and angered respectively.

The Government Buying Standards (GBS) were introduced by Defra and came into force on September 16. All central government departments must meet the standards, but Defra is the only one to have published its results. There are 18 standards to be met which cover a range of issues, from the use of tap water instead of bottled and the cooking of vegetables without salt, to pricing fruit cheaper than desserts and offering recycling facilities. Compass is meeting all of these.

The two it isn't meeting involve the sourcing of 100% sustainable fish and a minimum of 10% of products to assured higher standards such as organic and LEAF. The failure to source

sustainable fish has been a particular concern for Sustain. The group lobbied hard for Defra to include a criterion around fish, and the standard was developed outside of government and added after considerable pressure.

Jackson, who admits to having been left with his "head in his hands in despair" after meetings with Defra procurement officials, suggests that the real problem lies not with the caterers, but with the Government. "We're getting there with [Eurest]," he says. "The real problem is that Defra don't understand the standards, so if they don't then how can they expect Compass to follow them?"

In its response to further questions from Foodservice Footprint, Defra was adamant

It's the clever companies that are making moves on sustainability before they are kicked publicly

that the fish standard had been met. "Compass fell short on one target, ensuring the minimum criteria to meet higher environmental standards, for example organics or LEAF certified products," a spokesman said.

This kind of confusion has left caterers non-the-wiser about what is really being demanded of them, says Jackson, adding that herein lies the real issue for the sustainability agenda within public procurement. "A lot of the public sector is guilty of forgetting who the customer is. They need to remember that they are the customer and as such they can dictate the food they buy. All Defra needs to do is ask the caterer for X, Y or Z and if that isn't delivered then they look elsewhere."

That sounds simple, but can a huge company like Compass be expected to change its buying practices overnight?

Some retailers have managed to respond rapidly to new sustainability agendas, in areas such as plastic bags and Fairtrade bananas, as have many foodservice companies. McDonald's sources all of its fish from stocks certified by the Marine Stewardship Council; in fact the fast-food giant has higher standards in place than the Government when it comes to its sourcing of eggs, coffee and milk.

"The private sector seems to be more flexible and able to move to implement sustainable practices, and many have done so successfully," says Diana Spellman, founding director of Partners in Purchasing. "But those that have moved understand the long-term goals, which is why they've been proactive rather than reactive."

This idea of proactive change is something that others insist should stay front of mind for all those in foodservice. Examples include those that have made public commitments to Sustainable Fish City and gaining Marine Stewardship Council Chain of Custody; the likes of Sodexo, Holroyd Howe, Caterlink, ISS Food and Hospitality, BaxterStorey, and Restaurant Associates, the Compass fine dining brand.

Perhaps Compass will expand this initiative now throughout the business? "They're catching up," says Jackson, "and partly because we had to explain to them what the standards were about. But don't get me wrong, they are doing it because they've had us, Defra and the press kicking them."

Indeed, it's the "clever companies", as Jackson calls them, that are making the moves before they're kicked publicly. The Government may also find that some clearer guidance and a little gentle shove here and there, may see many more of its caterers join the ranks of the "clever" – and less of its Ministers on Radio 4 pulling out their hair.



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London Boroughs at odds over food commitments

A NEW report has identified huge disparities in the actions being taken by London Boroughs to promote healthy and sustainable food.

The London Boroughs of Islington and Richmond-upon-Thames have been praised for “inspiring food leadership”, in a unique audit carried out by Sustain, while others such as Newham and Westminster were criticised for their lack of engagement with the sustainable food agenda.

A total of 33 Boroughs were assessed on a range of sustainability criteria including their support for community food growing, improvements to school food, help for residents to reduce food waste, work with local food outlets to use healthier ingredients, and commitments to source ethical food for schools and local authority canteens, including Fairtrade products, free range eggs and sustainable fish.

The results have been mapped to provide a clearer view of how the Boroughs are performing in each category. Camden and Croydon were among eight Boroughs praised for “making excellent progress on key food issues”. Six Boroughs, on the other hand, were highlighted as “lagging behind disappointingly on action to support healthy and sustainable food”: they were Bexley, Brent, Hillingdon, Lewisham, Newham and Westminster.

The progress being made by Boroughs to promote healthier catering was seen as



KEY



ORANGE HEART TOP RATING:
Borough that is participating in the Healthier Catering Commitment scheme



YELLOW BLANK MIDDLE RATING:

Borough that has developed its own healthier catering scheme for businesses or is currently exploring participation in the Healthier Catering Commitment



GREY BLANK BOTTOM RATING:
Borough not yet participating in the Healthier Catering Commitment scheme

“impressive”, with many already having signed up to the new Healthier Catering Commitment for London. The scheme offers guidance to caterers and restaurants, describing straightforward changes that can be made to menus and the way food is prepared to ensure healthier diets and less waste.

Kath Dalmeny, policy director of Sustain, said some of the results were “inspiring” but added there is scope for London’s Boroughs to do much more, particularly to promote local and sustainably produced food, and to tackle childhood obesity.

The audit will be repeated early in 2012 to track progress, with additional planned measures to look at uptake of school meals, support for families living on a low income to buy good food, good food in planning policy, promoting local shops and markets, use of real bread, and supporting a bee-friendly environment.

Starting Gun for better food standards



Boris Johnson

LONDON MAYOR Boris Johnson has called on the capital’s restaurants, hotels and caterers to produce healthier meals from sustainable and British ingredients, as part of a new drive to help revitalise London’s food sector.

The Mayor wants to use the higher food standards put in place for the 2012 Games to create a lasting legacy for the foodservice industry, which generates billions of pounds for the capital’s economy and employs hundreds of thousands of people.

“We want [London 2012] to generate a step change in the commercial food sector, providing a boost for our food industry in terms of investment and jobs,” he said.

Innocent to up ante on sustainable diets

SMOOTHIE MAKER, Innocent drinks, will soon start “banging on” much more about sustainable diets, according to co-founder Richard Reed.

Speaking at the October Footprint Forum, Reed said encouraging people to eat a sustainable diet was a “30-year project”, but he hoped to help consumers understand the concept by perhaps using simple graphs on the sides of bottles. The graphs would give people a sense of how the ingredients in

Innocent products rated in relation to both health and environmental impact.

To date the Government has done little to define the term ‘sustainable diet’, although WWF-UK has developed an ‘Eatwell Plate’, which proposes a weekly menu that is good for both human health and the planet. It promotes the simple principles of eating more fruit, vegetables and cereals, but less meat and highly processed foods.

For the full forum report see page 15.

Junk food back on the school menu



Jamie Oliver's appearance on BBC Breakfast has put the spotlight back on school meals, with some of the government's new free schools trying to encourage crisps and fatty food back onto the menu to cut costs. *David Burrows reports.*

IT'S BEEN six years since Jamie Oliver assumed the role of 'dinner lady' at a Greenwich comprehensive to expose the uncomfortable truth about the poor quality of meals fed to British schoolchildren. Yet for all the progress made in getting kids to eat more nutritious foods since the Jamie's School Dinners programme first aired, in many cases the healthy eating message is still not getting through.

Nearly one in three children eats sweets, chocolate and crisps three or more times a day, while almost nine in 10 are not eating their recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables.

The worrying findings come as part of a new British Heart Foundation (BHF) survey of 2,000 11- to 16-year-olds. Based on the

results, the charity calculates a child's typical daily diet includes one packet of crisps, one chocolate bar, one bag of chewy jelly sweets, one fizzy drink and one energy drink. This means kids are consuming almost 30 teaspoons of sugar (118g), more fat than a cheeseburger, and over a third of their daily calorie intake from snacks alone.

What's more, some caterers are now being encouraged to bring back unhealthy snacks in what the Local Authority Catering Association (LACA) has referred to as "the return of the sausage roll to schools".

In 2008, on the back of a high-profile campaign led by Oliver himself, the law was tightened to encourage primary schools to serve healthier meal options to children with secondary schools following suit in 2009.

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FOOTPRINT HEALTH & WELLBEING

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However, Oliver has re-ignited the debate with a swipe at Education Secretary, Michael Gove, suggesting he is eroding healthy school food standards. Speaking on BBC Breakfast in late November, Oliver said that although so much has been achieved with school meals and the nutritional standards, the government's new free schools, which will be established as academies, could undo all the good work and allow bad habits to creep back in.

Asked if he is still worried about school meals he said: "Massively. Let's be clear though, five years ago there was more regulation for dog food than there was our children's food and we've achieved so much."

"The bit of work that we did which is law was a good bit of work for any government. So to erode it, which is essentially what Mr Gove is doing – his view is we let schools do what they want."

But is Oliver's attack on school meals justified and will his worst fears be realised? England's academies are semi-independent schools and as such they do not have to abide by regulations which set out strict nutritional guidelines for school food. The government says it trusts schools to act in their pupils' best interests and says it has no reason to believe that academies will not provide healthy, balanced meals that meet the current nutritional standards.

However, in a news report shown just before the live BBC discussion, LACA chair Lynda Mitchell expressed her concern over academies. She said that LACA members had a duty to provide nutritious food for children and that academies would be allowed to return to unhealthy meals if they chose to.

"Our members are telling us that they have been approached by academies to relax the rules and as providers to hundreds of thousands of schools we are concerned," she explained. "They are being asked to put confectionery and other snacks back, especially at mid-morning. It is the return of the sausage roll to schools."

One company that already supplies catering services to the new academies is Innovate Services. Chief executive Derick Martin said



that free schools will not result in Turkey Twizzlers making a comeback, adding that students are more health-conscious than they were five years ago.

"Over the last few years, attitudes have changed regarding school catering and we are never going to see a return of Turkey Twizzlers on the menus as a result. There are a number of reasons for this – the nutritional guidelines have, of course, made a difference overall, but also we believe that attitudes have significantly changed amongst not only school staff and operators, but with students themselves who are far more health-conscious today."

Martin added that there was a clear duty of care for caterers, principals and senior leadership teams at academies.

Oliver, however, maintained that some academies might well serve very good food of a nutritious standard, but not all of them would take that viewpoint. "I'm not saying that all services are perfect, but I'm not saying all services are bad. Head teachers have an awful lot to deal with and they are essentially running the biggest restaurant in town. I don't know of any other restaurant that has to serve 1,800 covers in less than 45 minutes."

Children's Food Campaign coordinator Christine Haigh says Oliver's thoughts

backed up reports she has been hearing from people on the ground. "It's clear that the loophole created by this Government is going to reverse years of hard work to improve food in schools. It's ridiculous that the Government is spending precious public money on a survey of food in academies, when healthy food could be maintained at no extra cost simply by requiring them to meet existing school food standards."

The School Food Trust says it is concerned about the reports of standards being relaxed, and wants to hear from anyone with concerns that an academy is choosing not to meet the national standards – whether that's by introducing less healthy foods back on to its menu or bringing back vending of chocolate and crisps.

"The results are another reminder of why the National School Food Standards and the forthcoming national, voluntary guidelines on healthy food and drink for early years settings have never been so important," says School Food Trust nutritionist, Jo Nicholas.

Oliver encountered resistance to his healthy menus when he first went into Kidbrooke School back in 2005 but gradually he won over the pupils, dinner ladies and teachers. Six years on, he could well have cause for a fresh assault on the educational establishment.

Sexing up the spud

Shunned by the government's 5-a-day scheme and marginalised by the rise of its trendier cousin the chip, the plain old potato is in danger of falling out of favour in foodservice. Can stronger innovation and better marketing hold the key to the spud's long-term prosperity? David Burrows reports.

IT IS the world's fourth most important food crop and forms 16% of meals out of the home with 1.87 billion servings [Potato Council] in Britain each year. There's no doubt the humble potato has an enviable CV and is incredibly important to the foodservice sector.

What has been in doubt is its role in our diet. Take a look at the Government's recommendations on what counts towards 5-a-day and top of the pile is 'fresh fruit and vegetables'. Those with a vested interest in the potato market would have liked the list to have stopped there, but it doesn't – there's a whole section on why potatoes don't count, even though they have been included in similar schemes in the US, France and Australia – and even though they are technically vegetables.

Or are they? Reacting to pressure when the 5-a-day scheme was first launched in 2003, one Junior Health Minister claimed that potatoes aren't vegetables: "Potatoes provide mainly carbohydrate in the form of starch whereas foods classified as fruit and vegetables provide much less carbohydrates," wrote Melanie Johnson. Other MPs said her claim was farcical, pointing to the potato's vitamin and nutrient content and low calorie levels. "I'm not suggesting we should all eat lots of chips, but what's wrong with baked potatoes?" said Tory MP Christopher Chope at the time.

The debate was reignited earlier this year when the potato industry stepped up pressure on the Department of Health

to recognise fresh spuds under the 5-a-day scheme after research revealed most consumers already believe the vegetable to be eligible.

The counter argument is that including potatoes would encourage consumers to eat more chips. And herein lies the problem. Brits love chips: we eat more chips out of home than sandwiches and over 70% of the potatoes we eat come as chips. What's more, British foodservice companies love them too: chips make up 40% of a platefill, yet just 10% of the cost [McCain research].

"No matter what the outlet is, chips continue to offer caterers ease of preparation, platefill and, most importantly, value for money," explains Mohammed Essa, Aviko general manager UK and Ireland. Indeed, based on a side of chips from Aviko, caterers can profit by 1,215% on every portion served.

With those kinds of margins, it's hardly surprising that the chip dominates the potato category. But is the foodservice sector over-reliant on them? Not so, says Lindsay Winsor, 3663 communications controller. "While chips are often seen on the menu in most outlets, it's also commonplace for other 'healthier' formats of potatoes to be offered as an alternative," she points out. "So it's a customer-driven choice to purchase chips, as opposed to the sector being reliant on them."

There is a criticism, however, that not enough is being done to push the healthier formats, like jacket potatoes or

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oven-baked wedges. Some even suggest that innovation has dried up given the potato's role as a core staple. "Rice and pasta are here to stay and have definitely taken a share of the market, so we need to look at ways to make the humble potato more marketable," says Ian Nottage, Reynolds chef director.

With chefs now also looking at pulses like quinoa, pearl barley and bulgar wheat as a point of difference, the potato is under more threat than ever. "If you're a fresh potato supplier, the main challenge is to ensure that chefs and menu planners keep them on the menu," says Douglas Bell, Greenvale business development manager. "Competition is rife from frozen potatoes and alternative dishes."

In retail, some of the brands are already investing heavily to try and sex the potato up. Albert Bartlett is the most prominent to date, having spent £3m on a campaign for its Rooster brand which was spear-headed on TV by Marcia Cross – star of *Desperate Housewives* – and on pack by Michel Roux and Andrew Fairlie.

Activity in foodservice has been less 'noisy', but there are shoots of innovation. Fenmarc,

for instance, recently launched its Rudolph variety – a premium-red maincrop potato that "caters for all tastes" according to TV chef Rachel Green. Julian Willis is in charge of commercial supply at Fenmarc: "Other products may be getting more 'noise' coverage [but] potatoes are still used for the most meal occasions. Our job is to ensure consistency of supply, size and taste ... this then allows the chefs to innovate with different styles and meal usages – rather than pigeon-holing many varieties to particular usages. There is plenty of scope [for innovation but] suppliers and chefs need to work together."

Others also believe in close collaboration to help invigorate the potato, with the NPD and development chefs at the supplier end working with the NPD and development chefs from foodservice companies. "There is room to get the right potato for the job," says QV Foods sales and marketing director, Simon Martin. "Fit-for-purpose potatoes that have been grown, stored and selected to excel in particular dishes have the potential to transform the eating experience, while prepared potatoes can offer invaluable shortcuts to overworked chefs."

CV

Name: Potato
D.O.B: 1600 AD (in the UK)
National value: £496m
Best known for: chips
Vital stats: naturally fat-free, low cal, good vitamin and nutrient content
Ambitions: fend off competition from 'healthier' carbs and be part of the 5-a-day



Mash, for instance, is slowly on the increase and can tick boxes with regard to healthy eating. The format is being used to bring spuds to the 5-a-day party, with potato mash in combination with other vegetables, like swede or carrots that are classified as part of 5-a-day, becoming particularly popular in pubs. 'Skin on' and flavoured potato wedges are also providing a healthy, versatile alternative to chips.

But what about those margins? Well, according to Aviko's Essa, using speciality potato products is a "sure fire way to make money". He explains: "Not only will side dishes such as wedges, creamy mash and potato gratin open up a wider variety of choice to customers, they could also command a higher premium price point. In fact, based on the average price for a serving of wedges, caterers could stand to double their gross profit per serving."

The potato's reputation has been chipped away over the years, but volumes have remained relatively steady. Only with some innovation will the potato continue to hold its own – regardless of whether it's part of the 5-a-day or not.

Footprint Forum: 23 November 2011

The foodservice industry faces many headaches when it comes to international sourcing of raw materials. But November's forum provided a clarity and vision that ensured it was only the 'not-so-Innocent' cocktails that had attendees reaching for the Aspirin.

David Burrows reports.

Fruit for thought

IT WAS always going to be an experience. But expectations of Fruit Towers, home to Innocent Drinks, had been raised by a television documentary screened the previous week focusing on the co-founder, Richard Reed. Viewers had been treated to an office replete with table tennis tables, over-sized bean bags and artificial grass flooring.

Perhaps the latter is in homage to Reed's first ever business venture, cutting lawns, for which he made £2.50 an hour? In today's world, that would buy you one of his company's smoothies. How things have changed. And change was very much the focus of this, the fifth and final forum of 2011 – right down to the format of the event. Not only were there presentations and an interactive discussion, as is the norm, but also a 'part two' with a talk by Richard Reed, followed by a Q&A and, of course, those cocktails (to find out how people found the new set up, go to www.foodservicefootprint.com).

But let's start at the beginning. Barbara Crowther, director of communications and policy for the Fairtrade Foundation, showed just how reliant the UK's food industry has become on international agriculture. "We import £1.3bn of goods from Africa," she explained, "including products that we can grow here, but can't grow enough of. On the flipside, that means that there are millions of people reliant on agriculture – the irony being that half of the world's hungriest people are from farming families."

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This is often the 'great debate' when it comes to UK sourcing: is it more sustainable to buy UK produce? As many agreed at the discussion, there is no 'silver bullet'. However, there seemed to be a growing realisation of how to increase value for the poorest farmers in the world, and in turn how agriculture can then be what Crowther sees as a "springboard to wider economic development".

Indeed, if prior to the Forum, anyone in the audience underestimated the reliance of UK foodservice on international, often small farmers, they were left in no doubt at its conclusion. The climate is right to do more, rallied Crowther. And there are companies doing just that.

Companies like Wealmoor, a primary import, production and marketing company with a focus on speciality produce. Wealmoor's procurement stretches far and wide, and Jayesh Dodhia, head of vegetable procurement at the company explained how important it was for Wealmoor to work with farmers large and small. Once again, Africa was singled out as a "huge source", with Wealmoor having worked closely with the production end of the chain through its 'Small Grower Scheme'. "Not only have standards and yields improved, but there has been a social uplift," Dodhia explained, "with one group of farmers match-funding investment for a health centre in the community."

This idea of providing more than just a fair price, more than just agronomy expertise, more than just a market for products, shone through during the event. It was, in fact, according to Reed, the very principle on which Innocent was founded: to give something back. In order to ensure

its business is sustainable, Innocent has a 5-point strategy covering sustainable nutrition, sustainable ingredients, sustainable production, sustainable packaging and sustainable legacy.

In terms of the ingredients, the business has clearly learned a lot. From the complicated decisions involved in setting a sustainable strategy to individual sourcing issues like the one Innocent is facing in Spain with strawberries. There, explained ingredients manager Rozanne Davis, the company had encountered a water conflict, with the demands from farmers and an adjacent national park putting strain on a vast underground aquifer. "We faced a decision," she explained. "Do we change our sourcing, or do we face the challenge?"

They faced the challenge. In other words, they took responsibility. It's something more and more companies who rely so heavily on food are realising. Look at Cadbury's cocoa plan and its work with Fairtrade, or Nestlé's work with the Rainforest Alliance. This isn't so their PR agency can write a self-congratulatory press release, but because they realise the important link between sustainable sourcing and future-proofing their supply. Where would Cadbury be without cocoa, or Nestlé without coffee?

As such, it was fascinating to hear what consumers felt about ethical sourcing. Two Tomorrows executive chairman, Mark Line, presented a wealth of data and reports which showed that making the world a better place remains important to people, but that isn't reflected in their purchases. "There's a real disconnect between people's concerns and the choices they make," he concluded, highlighting that in 2009 people spent on average just \$11 each year on fair-trade

products. Evidence suggests this disconnect could be even more severe in foodservice, with consumers often admitting to leaving their ethics behind when they eat out. So what can be done?

This is where the discussion panel took up the challenge. Communication – valuable, clear communication – was what it all boiled down to. Nine out of 10 people want more information when they are eating out of home so they can make more sustainable choices, highlighted Line. The consistency in some of the language out there already was also causing confusion, for instance, the difference between responsible sourcing and sustainable procurement. "A lot of companies have got comfortable with their own definitions of 'sustainable' and 'responsible'," added Line.

This is where certification schemes were felt to have a valuable role – offering that third party, independent accreditation that consumers trust. However, there was frustration over what many saw as a battle between different schemes to get the upper hand. The idea of a pooling of resources among "similar schemes" was suggested or, perhaps more realistically, the use of one audit process at the production end.

The role of certification schemes going forward is currently a hot topic (see page 6), but Innocent has proved that it's unlikely that businesses will find just one scheme that ticks all the boxes. That's why it created its 5-point strategy, which includes its own initiatives as well as working with the likes of the Rainforest Alliance on its sourcing of bananas and pineapples. But the question still begs: from where did it source the artificial grass?



Top comments

"Could the likes of Fairtrade, the Rainforest Alliance and one or two others sit down and create one mark, using the economies of scale to achieve their ambitions?"

Mark Line, Two Tomorrows executive chairman

"One bit of the [sustainable procurement] conversation that gets missed is the 'power' aspect. There is a big difference between being a recipient of corporate philanthropy to being offered the power to drive the agenda from the production end."

Barbara Crowther, Fairtrade Foundation head of policy

"We looked at the other standards out there, but there wasn't one that covered all the issues for us. There won't be one certification scheme that will be a silver bullet for all countries and all crops."

Rozanne Davis, Innocent ingredients manager

"We've never advocated 100% self-sufficiency across all sectors – that would be ludicrous. The question is whether it is sustainable on the ground. Producers in the developing world and the UK are facing the same problems and unfair commercial practices, and that's what we are trying to change."

Lee Woodger, National Farmers Union head of food chain unit

"What we are doing is the tip of the iceberg. I don't think there is a global versus local conflict – local has its benefits and international sourcing affects people living in poorer conditions."

Jayesh Dodhia, Wealmoor head of vegetable procurement

"The EU imports 30-odd million tonnes of soya, and next year China will import 50-odd million tonnes of it. That's because the people there are eating more meat. The scale of commodity crops is huge and if we don't make those sustainable, we don't have a chance."

Tim Oliver, AB Sustain head of biodiversity and supply chain assurance.

Innocent by name...

...passionate by nature?

The new forum format gave members a chance to hear from the co-founder of Innocent, Richard Reed. They also had a chance to quiz him for his thoughts on a range of issues.

Richard Reed on...

... Innocent's products

"We make products using ingredients that we need to eat more of [except oily fish]. There is no point getting hair-shirted about it, you need to make it easy for consumers."

... sustainable sourcing

"Often the ideas will be simple, but getting there will be complicated. Our suppliers are now engaging with us, and sustainability for them is no longer a bolt-on but part of the business relationship."

... sustainable diets

It's an issue that Reed is sure will come to the fore in the coming 12 months. He admits that Innocent will be "banging on about this much more next year", and their role will be to help try and bring complex ideas to consumers. As such, there could soon be simple graphs on the side of smoothie bottles to convey the relationship between health and environmental drivers which Reed says helps people "get the idea of sustainable diets". However, achieving sustainable diets is a 30-year project, he adds.

... employee power

Power to the employees seems to be the name of the game for Reed (why else would they have such a rich working environment). "Employee power can be more directly powerful than consumer power. If I work for Kit Kat, and I change the cocoa I source, that's much more powerful than if I, as a consumer, choose not to eat a Kit Kat."

... Innocent

Reed talks of the company's 'Miss World like' ethos to leave things better than it found them. However, there is only so much he admits they can do alone, being "just a fruit-filled pimple" in the large scale of things.

Top facts

- 56** The number of times more the EU spends on subsidies for its farmers than it does on international aid for agriculture in developing countries
- £1.6bn** Amount of food the UK imports from Africa
- 7.5m** Number of people benefitting directly from Fairtrade
- 60%** Products from overseas that arrive in the UK on scheduled flights
- £19.17** Amount per UK consumer spent on Fairtrade in 2009



Accountability is the NEW GREEN



AS THE Economic & Social Research Council reports; the history of social and environmental concern about business is as old as trade itself. Commercial logging operations, together with laws to protect forests, can be traced back almost 5,000 years. By the 1920s discussions about the social responsibilities of business had evolved into what we can recognise as the beginnings of the “modern” CSER movement.

Today we face many of the same corporate, social and environmental issues. But over the last decade – prompted by the advent of global warming and publicity about child labour and the like – businesses world-wide have quickened the pace of CSER evolution recognising the magnitude of their responsibilities to future civilisations.

A new buzz-word

One of the current CSER buzz-words is ‘accountability’ – being called to account and made answerable for one’s actions.

For Brakes Group, CSER accountability runs through the heart of its CSER strategy, operations and programmes. It’s committed to ‘protecting tomorrow today’; minimising its impact on the environment and respecting the communities it serves.

To have true accountability, Brakes Group has followed a stringent process. We have identified a series of strategic drivers; set clear targets against each; sought the commitment of senior management; formulated associated policies and procedures; developed specific activities and programmes; created tactical delivery teams;

and, most importantly – accurately reported achievements.

Setting strategic drivers and targets

Following a comprehensive CSER risk and opportunity exercise, Brakes Group established a robust CSER framework focusing on five strategic drivers. These CSER ‘pillars’ reflect various areas of business Brakes Group business engagement, to deliver a more sustainable future for all.

For instance, within its community pillar, Brakes Group is dedicated to working with charities that particularly improve healthy eating for those who lack access to nutritional food or to assist young people into work. And under its environment pillar, Brakes Group is aiming to drive down food miles, reduce fuel consumption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become more energy efficient.

Each pillar is given a clear set of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed objectives – which the business is accountable for achieving.

Policies and actions are also developed to help customers – from both the cost and profit sector – to meet their own specific CSER strategy, commitments and targets.

Seeking team buy-in and defining activities

To achieve internal buy-in at every level, a member of the Brakes Group executive team sponsors each CSER pillar, supported by a number of senior managers in the business.

The company formed working groups –

internally and externally – to deliver specific CSER activities and programmes. Each group is given accountability for a scheme’s investment, logistics, trial and delivery against the corporate schedule.

The Group Executive Committee regularly reviews progress to ensure all activity is in line with company strategy and that the organisation is on track to meet or exceed the agreed targets.

Creating a ‘code of conduct’

Specific CSER policies and procedures have been devised and defined to provide clear working practices and accountabilities on a wealth of different business areas. Such Environmental, Health & Safety and Equal Opportunity Policies documents are supplied to Brakes Group employees, suppliers and customers.

Conducting transparent & accurate reporting

Of course, being held accountable is reliant on effective, transparent and accurate reporting.

To achieve this Brakes Group Board of Directors and its Executive Committee regularly review progress against key milestones – taking action where appropriate, to ensure the company’s CSER strategy is delivered and all commitments are upheld.

Brakes Group will continue to stretch the boundaries of what can be achieved in foodservice and is committed to being accountable to current and future generations.



Committed to a better tomorrow

Sodexo's sustainability strategy to 2020, the Better Tomorrow Plan has been developed to consolidate its corporate citizenship efforts across the world and is built around three pillars: 'We are' - which embraces values and ethics, 'We do' - which sets out 14 commitments to action on sustainability challenges, and 'We engage' - which recognises the dialogue required to translate commitments into action.

In 2010 Sodexo has received silver status for the fourth consecutive year in Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index and Tillery Valley, its prepared foods business, was awarded the Carbon Trust Standard.

For more information on Sodexo's actions visit www.sodexo.com

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Something to SHOUT ABOUT

Consumer-facing caterers such as McDonald's and Starbucks love to tell the world about how they're saving the planet. Their contract counterparts, on the other hand, often remain guarded and fearful of publicity. But are contract caterers right not to shout about their sustainability efforts? *Joe Fernandez* reports.

THE GOLDEN Arches is one of the defining emblems of the global food industry yet ask the man on the street what Compass Group's logo looks like and you'll probably be met with a blank expression. In employee and revenue terms, Compass and McDonald's are broadly comparable in size yet in the way they leverage their brand to talk about sustainability initiatives the two are poles apart. McDonald's recently ran a series of TV adverts in the UK promoting its A-Z of corporate responsibility efforts. The closest you're likely to get to unpicking Compass' progress on sustainability is downloading its annual report.

Contract caterers rarely have their brand as consumer facing, which means they haven't necessarily had to be as proactive in talking up their environmental achievements. Yet with consumers increasingly demanding transparency from all businesses, pressure to be seen to be engaging with issues of sustainability will increasingly be exerted further down the supply chain.

"The catering industry firms do not have to address the consumer and media pressures so forthrightly, but many of the targets are applicable to them and their customers can place just as much emphasis on ethical and sustainable standards as the consumer," points out Steve Kelsey, strategic innovations director at branding and design consultancy pi global.



So just how big are the differences between these hidden professional brands and the more consumer-focused giants whose identity can be instantly recalled by their logos – or even their jingles – alone? And are contract caterers missing a trick in keeping such achievements tucked away in stakeholder reports?

Part of the reason for the 'hidden' label that surrounds firms in the catering industry is the professional nature of the sector. Cost remains a key driver of contract negotiations and while many customers care deeply about ethics and the environment, budgetary constraints mean others can't afford to pay a premium for a more 'sustainable' service. "Where the client is saying actually I need you to cut your costs, I need you to change your menus, I need you to take some of the nicer things out and make it more basic, then there's a limit to how far we can go," says Sodexo chief executive Aidan Connolly. "I can't impose [sustainability] on my client."

Of course, the level of public awareness of sustainability initiatives is hardly a reliable gauge of genuine progress. The likes of Sodexo and Compass have made impressive strides in areas such as

carbon reduction, waste management and responsible sourcing, with whole sections of annual reports dedicated to corporate social responsibility in the same way as their consumer counterparts. But neither chooses to publicise its efforts to consumers.

Whilst
Coca-Cola

may be taking full page ads promoting new 'Plant Bottles' and McDonald's may be emphasising the freshness of its eco-friendly ingredients and packaging ahead of London 2012, catering firms do most of their work in the background, content to let consumer brands steal the limelight.

Connolly, however, says he does not feel the need to shout about it to a wider audience because he's not seeking approbation from the marketplace.

"It's difficult for me to justify diverting effort into shouting about stuff because the audience I'm shouting to is actually quite concentrated and I can reach them better with our Better Tomorrow Plan, with good PR and with small functions."

Where consumer facing companies have the burden of having to respond to a series of issues around sustainability, waste management, and corporate responsibility because they are heavily in the public eye, caterers can be much more discrete with how they address these issues. Melanie Edghill, marketing director at Catermasters, says overt branding at point of sale is difficult for firms like hers because clients dictate what they want and how they will present it.

"It's difficult for me to justify diverting effort into shouting about stuff because the audience I'm shouting to is actually quite concentrated and I can reach them better with our Better Tomorrow Plan with good PR and with small functions."

Rather than shouting about your own company's achievements, Edghill suggests the focus should be on making sure you can meet the demands of your customers so they in turn can be seen to be fulfilling their responsibilities. "You need to identify a brand ethos and really communicate that every time you speak to a potential customer. Clients are always benchmarking you against certain demands and it's up to you to prove that you can help them with dilemmas such as being green or Fairtrade or having systems in place to divert waste from landfills."

Philip Davies president of EMEA at branding specialists Siegel+Gale, agrees but adds that opportunities still exist to use the consumer facing brand and experience in

order to promote, even subtly, the contract catering group brand behind it; for example in the way that Unilever has used its group brand to accentuate product brands like Persil or Cif or Comfort.

Septics, however, argue that keeping green claims confined to corporate reports helps catering brands err on the side of caution in light of increasing scrutiny from the public and NGOs. Many sustainability efforts of late have been criticised as 'greenwashing' and branding experts warn that the wrong statements have the potential to bite hard when consumers are so keenly focused on ethical values.

A former senior marketer at Premier Foods Foodservice suggests that the contract catering industry has already been stung by negative publicity from shows such as Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution which, rather than make white label firms talk more openly about their sourcing policies and green commitments, has instead seen them retreat further into their shells.

"It's easier for us than others because of the Premier Group name, but the industry has become side-tracked by recent documentaries like Jamie Oliver's. Nowadays clients expect sustainable offerings, but they also want reasonable costs and it can be a struggle to make the two go hand-in-hand. This is why I think many firms remain hidden on their eco credentials and various green efforts."

Part of Premier's manoeuvring to accommodate the changing industry was opening up its 700-strong product line to offer branded, own-label and bespoke products "to suit every caterer with a bunch of promises related to the environment and sourcing methods". Unilever has done similar work and private firms like Cucina, have vowed to "concentrate on the people and the food and let the profits take care of themselves."

Such efforts could help to boost the profiles of these predominantly hidden brands that at least in terms of marketing and publicising their sustainability efforts are way behind their consumer-facing counterparts.

Whilst it may be naive to expect contract caterers to seek the exposure of a McDonald's or a Starbucks, by sticking their heads a little higher above the parapet they can become more aligned to increasingly tough consumer expectations of sustainability.

Philip Davies

President, EMEA for Siegel+Gale



THERE'S THIS performance artist, and eating is his current medium. He's eating his wardrobe. Time isn't an issue. He's focused on the long game. Every day, he sands down a bit more of his wardrobe and sprinkles the accumulated dust on his food. He derives a visceral thrill from it all. It's a commitment to his art but it's not playing to an audience.

It's a bit like some of the contract caterers out there. The good things they do remain largely invisible. And because bad makes a better story than good in the broadcast media, we only hear those stories about contract caterers that feed our school children turkey twizzlers, hospital patients shoddy grub and the Army lazy food. They don't linger on the stories of how well sourced their raw materials are or how they regenerate the places from where they grow their crops, or that they encourage healthy eating for organisations ranging from places of education to temples of finance to theatres of the celebrated.

That's too bad. Particularly when there are some remarkably good things that contract caterers do. Aside from feeding four billion people a year, pick up any Annual Report and there'll be a section devoted to all things green, environmental and sustainable. With their CSR Reports they really do go to town on these subjects too. Ensuring reductions in water and energy used in their offices, reducing the CO2 used in their vehicle fleets, reducing food miles by increasing the use of seasonally available products sourced from

the relevant domestic market. Websites have acres of digital real estate devoted to wellness and nutrition.

In trying to display their green commitments, part of the problem for contract caterers is that they're under the radar. It's easy for Tesco and their green labelling, or Mars and their Fairtrade stuff. Unlike their consumer-facing contemporaries, not many people have heard of Sodexo, or Compass or even Unilever Food Solutions.

Many opportunities exist to use the consumer facing brand and experience in order to promote, even subtly, the contract catering group brand behind it. They could do this much in the same way that Unilever has used its group brand to underscore product brands like Persil or Cif or Comfort. Or they could simply push further forward their own brand, at the point of consumer engagement, to begin a deeper understanding of them.

I'd suggest that they all look at their own brands. Almost without exception, contract catering brands look rather miserable, unimaginative and dull. A refreshed approach to presentation would be needed, a stronger story would need to be told and then, in time, the awareness for the good things they do will be appreciated. They'll no longer have to be in defence mode each time a TV chef decides to do an exposé on national TV on healthy eating.

The thing is there's an art to catering. And sometimes, just as in the very best restaurant, it's okay to invite patrons into the kitchen.



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DUDSON

Sustainable futures are made in the present



A look towards 2020 tells us that the foodservice sector should get serious about sustainability today, says Sally Uren, deputy chief executive, Forum For The Future.

FMCG BRANDS and retailers will help make green living normal and easy for millions of people, and progress towards sustainable consumption will not be knocked off course by a weak global economy. Those are the key findings of a report we published last month, *Consumer Futures 2020*, where, along with Sainsbury's and Unilever, we examine what mainstream consumers might be buying and how they might be living in 2020.

We believe *Consumer Futures 2020* has important implications for the foodservice sector.

Our conviction comes from the knowledge that there are some key trends which will force sustainable products and services into the mainstream, whether or not consumers actively demand them and regardless of whether the global economy is thriving or subdued.

Take resource availability. We know we are running low on vital natural resources, from water to wheat, and that price volatility will continue. It just isn't realistic to expect the natural resources on which all supply chains rely to be available in the same quantity and at the same low price as today.

We are also entering an era of radical transparency. Right now, consumers can easily find information on the origins of

products thanks to social media, and this trend is likely to continue. By the time we hit 2020, it just won't be possible for businesses and brands to gloss over areas of poor environmental and/or social performance.

However, there are some big unknowns, with the two biggest being the willingness of consumers to make changes in their lifestyles, and the prosperity of the economy. In *Consumer Futures*, we took these two big unknowns, and the known trends, and created four possible versions of 2020.

In 'My way', mainstream consumers buy locally, strengthening their local economies. Vertical farming is widespread, producing more food per unit of land. Global fast food brands take local identities.

In 'Sell it to me', driven by resource scarcity and a global deal on climate change, brands and businesses have taken a lot of the hard work out of being sustainable. Vertically integrated brands have stopped selling unsustainable products and sustainable products and services are commonplace.

In 'From Me to You', communities are again strengthened by local food and energy production. Resources are valued much more highly than today because they are scarce and expensive, and there is little or no waste. Goods exchanges are mainstream and community farms are the norm.

Finally, in 'I'm in your hands', the product to service shift has happened. Retailers and brands lease a lifetime's supply of key goods. Strict government legislation has delivered healthier choices and consumers take a 'waste not, want not' attitude.

So, what does this tell us about what the foodservice sector should be doing today?

I would start with these three actions. Firstly, start to adapt your business model today. In all of our scenarios brands and businesses have evolved and adapted their business functions to address challenges such as resource scarcity and changing consumer demands.

Number two, strengthen local production and embrace vertical integration. This will reduce risk of supply chain disruption from resource shortages and climate impacts, as well as give products and services a local, authentic story which will resonate with consumers.

Finally, get on with selling sustainability, but not as a single issue. In all of the scenarios, even though consumer awareness of the issues varies, sustainability has been made easy by bringing additional benefits to consumers, from price point value to improved nutrition. This duality of benefit is critical for brands and business to start to get right today.



Small steps to successful engagement

**Footprint Forum:
6 October 2011**

Stakeholder engagement could well be seen as the shiny Russian doll of the business world: as you crack open one layer, there is another waiting to greet you. So how do you keep everyone happy? *David Leydon* reports.

THE MANTRA for Foodservice Footprint is to help businesses 'marry sustainable ambition with commercial reality'. That's not easy, especially when there are so many stakeholder groups to satisfy. Suppliers, investors, customers and employees all have a vested interest in how you go about your business.

For some companies, size helps – think Wal-Mart and its supplier sustainability assessments or Unilever and its target to source 100% of the raw materials it buys from sustainable sources. Across the food industry, companies are swapping their brogues for boots to get closer to their supply chains and engage more closely with producers and suppliers.

However, don't try and do too much too soon was the advice on offer from industry leaders at Footprint's Stakeholder Engagement Forum, held in London on 6 October. When, for example, Wendy Bartlett and her partners founded Bartlett Mitchell, they decided they'd identify what worked and then stick with it. Their motto is to only change things when they need changing because big shifts only serve to frustrate the stakeholders involved.

Suppliers aren't the only stakeholders that need to be satisfied. How about investors? Unilever's boss, Paul Polman, caused quite a stir when he said that he wanted investors to buy into the long-term value model the company had created with its Sustainable Living Plan; a model that is equitable, shared and sustainable. "If you don't buy into this," he explained, "I respect you as a

human being, but don't put your money in our company."

Turning away potential investors is a bold and potentially risky approach, but Polman, for one, is no stranger to controversy: he has strong views on how his business is run and those views filter down through every level of Unilever's organisational hierarchy.

Employees are, of course, an essential ally to those with big green ambitions. With over 40,000 employees in the UK & Ireland, Sodexo is a vast organisation that operates

*Effective engagement
can ensure the marriage
between sustainable
ambition and commercial
reality remains strong*

a diverse portfolio. With this in mind, it has developed a narrative that reflects the company's culture and goals, and which can then be opened up to stakeholders, including employees. One such platform is GreenSpark, which asked employees to submit their ideas on how Sodexo could become greener. The result? Three ideas were implemented which has helped to contribute to an enviable 67% of Sodexo employees feeling 'highly engaged' with the company's sustainability agenda.

This type of engagement takes time and effort, but it's worth it. KPMG, for instance, encourages employees to take their existing work-based skill set and apply them outside of the office environment, an

approach that has seen it reinvest £10.9m into local communities with 39% of KPMG employees having also donated their spare time to external causes.

Such results don't come about by chance: employees need to be constantly engaged and excited. Futerra's Harriet Kingaby explained how she had recently helped E.ON revamp their champion scheme – the incumbent champions having become little more than reviled 'bin police'. With additional support from the management – by retaining and recruiting new champions and encouraging innovation – the E.ON scheme was turned around. The most important factors, said Kingaby, are involving the right people who are knowledgeable, charismatic and connected, and then supporting them from above.

Indeed, the overriding message from the panel was that engagement without the right leadership and support is something that can fizzle out. Effective engagement, on the other hand, can ensure that the marriage between sustainable ambition and commercial reality remains strong, passionate and exciting.

A full report from the forum is available on the website: www.foodservicefootprint.com



Dear All,

All this talk of reducing food wastage has left me fearful for the future of my business. We are a gastropub where hearty portions are a major part of our appeal. Nowadays, however, it's not only an insult to the chef when food comes back, apparently it's also deemed unsustainable. How can we reduce leftovers without making the customer think we are offering smaller portions and less value for money?

P. Coleman

Yours in anticipation

WASTED
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Dining in the dark

Dear Sir,

I sympathise with you entirely. When I was a young whippersnapper we still had rationing; you ate what was put in front of you, and you were grateful for it.

I remember how my mother used to lock me in the dining room until I had finished my meal. I'm not suggesting you do that in your restaurant - it would slow down service - however, a little pressure applied by a smiling waiter or waitress can do no harm. Lighthearted asides such as, "Sir, my five-year-old daughter could have finished that steak", will cajole people into taking that extra mouthful and doing their bit for the environment.

Other incentives to bloated diners could include a free pudding if they finish their main course. Although the chances are they may not finish the pudding, in which case you'll have to offer them a free coffee if they finish their pudding, and so on until you have no margin left.

But if you are willing to invest this kind of money - and let's face it the best way to solve issues of sustainability is to chuck money at them - then a few small changes to serving dishes could make all the difference. I am currently in the process of copyrighting my idea for Catchphrase Plates™, whereby the catchphrase, initially obscured by the food, is only completely revealed when the diner finishes their meal. Diners can then win a prize by quoting this catchphrase (example: "Phwoar, I'm stuffed!") to their waiter. This would encourage people to finish their meals, as well as ignite some friendly family banter.

You should also take a tip from the more exclusive restaurants that I frequent. Many of them have got around the problem of food wastage by serving tiny portions and excusing it as "artisan" presentation.

Of course, there is a much simpler way to reduce waste. Even when there is food left over, not all of it need go to waste. You couldn't send out a half-eaten pie again or melted ice cream, but what is wrong with sending out uneaten mash, or unfinished soup to a second customer? After all, it's about time people started putting the planet first.

Yours sincerely,
P. Coleman



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