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FOOTPRINT



CHANGE FOR LIFE

The businesses nudging consumers to make more sustainable choices

FUTURE THOUGHT

What makes a great sustainability plan?

FROZEN OUT

Is now the time for GM to come in from the cold?

SLIM PICKINGS:

Government obesity strategy lacks weight

FORUM AT FRUIT TOWERS:

Supply chains, ethics and cocktails on the menu at Innocent HQ

SUSTAINABLE DIETS:

They're not rocket science, says WWF-UK



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Comment...

Footprint Contacts

Editor-in-Chief

David Burrows
david@foodservicefootprint.com

Chief Sub Editor

Nick Hughes

Staff writer

Kathy Bowry
kathy@foodservicefootprint.com

Staff Writer/Reporter

Emiliana Silvestri
editorial@foodservicefootprint.com

Staff Writer

Jackie Mitchell
jackie.mitchell@btconnect.com

New Business Manager

Chris Levoi
chris.levoi@footprintmedia.org

Art Direction

Trevor Marshall
trevor@foodservicefootprint.com

Events and Online Director

Christophe Stourton
xtophe@footprintexperience.com

Financial Controller

Eve Mahler
eve@footprintmedia.org

CEO

Nick Fenwicke-Clennell
nick@foodservicefootprint.com

Managing Director

Charles Miers
charlie@foodservicefootprint.com

News

news@foodservicefootprint.com

Advertising

advertising@foodservicefootprint.com

Accounts

accounts@foodservicefootprint.com

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White lies do not green companies make

In the past month I have received press releases highlighting one company's ambition to cut its 122 million tonne carbon footprint, another's success in slashing 2.5 million tonnes from its green bottom line and one that has zero transport emissions thanks to a policy of providing all staff with a unicycle. Okay, so it's obvious that I made that last one up, but what about the others? In fact, all three are made up but only the last one by me – the other two made it into official CSR reports. Some businesses may well lay claim to such progress, but others seem to be trying their luck with some rather dodgy claims, and some even dodgier statistics. Researchers at the University of Leeds and Euromed Management School poured over 4,000 CSR reports, rankings and surveys and found the quality of environmental data to be "appalling".

Boffins at the two institutes spent 22 hours a day (probably) in dark rooms pouring over the reports, just in case there was a story for *The Guardian*. And there was. In fact, there were dozens of them. BT, for instance, claimed its Irish and Dutch employees didn't travel at all in 2007 (were they waiting at home in case the engineer turned up to fix their broadband?). Italian energy company ENEL suggested its carbon emissions were in the region of 122m tonnes – four times that of the entire planet, while E.ON went the other way and made an entire power plant disappear, along with a couple of million tonnes of CO₂.

Those companies that were found out failed to realise that CSR isn't some nice little brochure to send around to the industry once in a while along with a bag to place your old clothes in. To find this level of inaccuracy in a financial report would be a scandal, but in sustainability reporting it appears to be common practice. The question begs: do stakeholders even bother to read the reports?



David Burrows
Footprint Editor in Chief

Thankfully, some do, like Dr Barkemeyer, lecturer in CSR at the University of Leeds, and his team. NGO's do a great job of keeping some companies in check, but they also have to be careful, as do governments, about the claims they make. On a weekly basis, there are billions of pounds to be saved from turning off the lights or recycling, which makes me wonder if we are in the midst of a 'decade of over-exuberant green claims'? What is next, I wonder? Cutting waste can make you more money than selling oil; turn the heating down a degree and you could save 34 Maldivians a year by 2020; cycle to work and you might get the chance to cut up Boris Johnson.

Granted, these may all be a little 'BT' in terms of their accuracy, but we need to be careful. Big bold targets are not a new phenomenon, but we're now reaching a stage where these will be heavily scrutinised as some of the target deadlines appear on the horizon. That means you have to be sure you're doing what your CSR report says on the tin. With many of the big grocers and food manufacturers having ambitious targets in place for 2020 (see page 16), there's less than a decade to ensure that aspirations are successfully translated into performance.



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UTZ means 'good' in a Mayan language. Ten years ago the UTZ CERTIFIED program started in Guatemala. Coffee farmers are provided with training and education enabling them to produce coffee in a sustainable way, taking care of the people and the environment. An UTZ CERTIFIED farmer is a professional, connected to our worldwide traceability system, which gives us all the assurance of good and constant quality. Better for farmers, better for industry, and now you can drink your favourite coffee brand with an even better feeling!

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Kerry Owens,
Marketing Director
Douwe Egberts UK



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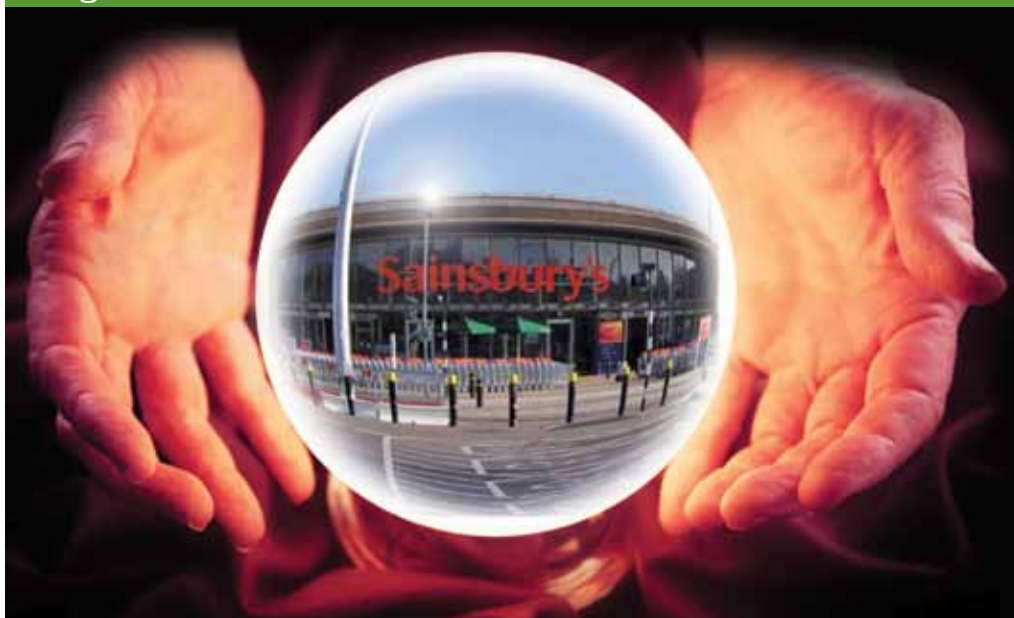
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This month's contributors

Sustainable diets are a hot potato that various quangos and government departments have picked up and promptly passed on in the past couple of years. With the Government stalling **Mark Driscoll**, head of WWF-UK's One Planet Food programme, suggests it could be up to businesses to push the agenda. And it might not be as difficult as everyone is making out. See page 9.



Plan A suggests that there isn't a plan B, yet Marks and Spencer's game-changing initiative is now just one of a number of sustainability plans launched in the grocery sector.

Nick Hughes takes a look at what's out there and investigates what makes a great sustainability plan (page 16). Nick, an experienced food business journalist, also provides a frank assessment of the Government's obesity strategy (page 19).



Ethical labels no longer hot stuff

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

Those representing some of the biggest certification schemes have defended their role. “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.

Smoothies to make sense of sustainable diets

SMOOTHIE MAKER, Innocent drinks, wants to start communicating better with customers about sustainable diets.

Speaking at the October Footprint Forum, the company’s co-founder Richard Reed said encouraging people to eat a sustainable diet was a “30-year project”, but he hoped to help consumers understand the concept using simple graphs on the sides of bottles. The graphs would give people a sense of how the food 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’. However, 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 19.



Richard Reed - Innocent Co-founder



FOODIE ATTRACTION Celebrity chefs like Nigella Lawson and Jamie Oliver are encouraging a “food revolution” among younger people. Shoppers aged under 35 are twice as likely to want organic food as those over 35. They are also more likely to cook from scratch, aspire to shop ethically and waste less food. The findings come from the latest IGD ShopperTrack research. The survey revealed that 26% of shoppers under 35 expect to buy more organic food over the next 12 months, compared with 13% of over-35s. Almost a third of people under 35 are also willing to pay more for premium quality food.

More commit to better soy

THREE MORE retailers have made commitments to source sustainable soy, or that which doesn't cause deforestation. The Co-operative has committed to using sustainable soy in feed for animals reared for its own-brand meat products by 2015. M&S, meanwhile, has said it will procure soy from sources that don't contribute to deforestation by 2015. Sainsbury's has set out to buy "100% responsibly sourced soy to an independent standard such as RTRS".

All three retailers are members of the Roundtable for Responsible Soy (RTRS). However, none of them have yet made clear that their sustainable soy will be RTRS certified. WWF, which is campaigning for supermarkets to buy 100% RTRS soy by 2015, said it would be "watching with interest" as the buying plans develop.

The hope is that each will follow Waitrose's lead and source only RTRS soy which, according to WWF, is the best solution currently available to halt the "devastating impact" cultivation of the crop is having on natural habitats in Argentina and Brazil.

Tesco and Morrisons have yet to make any commitments on their soy procurement, though WWF has been encouraged that both are looking at the issue. Tesco, for instance, co-chairs the Sustainability Steering Group of the Consumer Goods Forum, a key part of which is to achieve zero deforestation by 2020.

"Tackling the issues around soy is a big task, but one we think is essential to help achieve [the target set in the CGF]," said Tesco sustainability and climate change director, Helen Fleming.



Waste targets within reach

GROCERY RETAILERS and manufacturers have already managed to cut packaging weight and waste by 5.1% and reduce household food waste by 3%. This puts them well on track to meet the targets of Phase 2 of the Courtauld Commitment of 10% and 4% respectively by 2012.

More challenging has been reducing packaging and product waste in the supply chain. Reductions so far total 0.4%, with a 2012 target of 5%.

The Courtauld Commitment is a voluntary agreement that began in 2005 to encourage businesses to improve their overall performance and reduce their environmental impact. Phase 2 began in March 2010 and is due to complete in December 2012; it follows the original Courtauld Commitment, but moves away from solely weight-based targets and aims to achieve more sustainable use of resources over the entire lifecycle of products, throughout the whole supply chain.

At the launch of Phase 2 on 4 March 2010, 29 major retailers and brand owners had already pledged their commitment to this voluntary agreement. Currently, there are 53 signatories, according to the scheme's organisers at the Waste & Resources Action Programme.



Carbon cut by 25%

THE FOOD and drink industry has slashed CO2 emissions by 25%, putting it on target to meet the target of 35% cuts by 2020. Cutting 163 million HGV road miles helped business to deliver the cuts.

Water use has also fallen by 5.3%, while product and packaging waste has been cut by 6.9%, according to the latest Five-fold Environmental Ambition progress report published by the Food and Drink Federation (FDF).

The FDF said that, crucially, companies have achieved these reductions while increasing production to meet growing demand. "Decoupling environmental impacts from economic growth is key to meeting the sustainability challenges of the future and to our own and global food security," said

Andrew Kuyk, FDF's director of sustainability and competitiveness.

In 2011, the Five-fold Environmental Ambition, FDF's flagship environmental programme, also began to address the sector's environmental impact beyond the factory gates by conducting research into sustainable supply chains, actively raising awareness amongst its members of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems and developing its 'Every Last Drop' guidance on efficient water use for food and drink companies.

Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Jim Paice said the sector had made "great progress" but warned that there was "always more to be done" to meet the longer-term targets.

No taste for sustainable diets in food policy

IF DAVID Cameron was still sore from the kicking he took from Labour MPs over the EU veto he was fortunate not to be present at City University's food symposium the following day. The theme for the event was 'Where is UK food policy going?' and the overriding opinion from the several hundred academics and NGO's in attendance was "nowhere fast", writes *Nick Hughes*.

One by one, speakers took to the stage to stress the need for a new plan to adapt to the changing dynamics of the global food market in order to ensure the UK's future food security. The verdict of the majority was that the current government has yet to rise to the challenge of devising a credible food strategy. Even Conservative MP Laura Sandys admitted that: "When you start to look at national security as a whole, food security has been left off the agenda."

The coalition was taken to task on everything from a lack of joined up thinking on food policy and its pandering to industry over obesity, to its refusal to lead scientific debates on new food technologies and its continued failure to define what constitutes a sustainable diet.

As the day progressed it became clear that there is no silver bullet to secure sustainable food supplies in the future. But delegates were in agreement that within the broader debate on food security there are certain 'no brainer' actions that the Government still refuses to move on.

One of these concerns advice on sustainable diets. Sue Dibb, head of the Brighton Food Partnership and soon to be executive director of the Food Ethics Council, used her speech to question the progress made by the coalition on providing



advice to consumers about sustainable consumption. "What advice is out there for consumers?" she asked. "There's lots on healthy eating, lots on green living – but we're a long way from having joined up information from government."

As Dibb pointed out, the Sustainable Development Commission had begun to develop a model of what a sustainable diet might look like based around reduced meat and dairy consumption, reduced consumption of processed, fatty foods and a reduction in food waste; then it was axed in the bonfire of the quangos last year. The Food Standards Agency, meanwhile, was in the process of integrating sustainability into its Eatwell Plate before its responsibilities for nutrition were curtailed by the Department of Health.

Since then, the silence on what constitutes a sustainable diet has been deafening. Balancing competing sustainability criteria such as carbon, water, health and ethics, to come up with a robust metric for measuring sustainability is not easy. But although there are still gaps in the evidence base, that's no reason not to begin offering consumers some sort of roadmap for sustainable consumption.

"We shouldn't wait until we have a perfect storm of information before we act

on this," said Dibb. "Policy won't change overnight so we need to make sure advice is shared and out there."

She urged businesses to seize the initiative and encourage consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions. Many supermarkets are already editing consumer choice based on sustainability criteria – sustainably certified fish being a classic example – but they've yet to tackle the really big issues, particularly around excessive meat and dairy consumption. "From businesses we're seeing some good progress on sustainable fish but meat is not something they feel able to have a conversation with their customers about yet," said Dibb.

She ended with a rallying call to stakeholders to keep banging on the door of government until it starts to listen. "It's not the most receptive political environment at the moment but we need to keep up the pressure."

Dibb is due to begin her role with the Food Ethics Council in January and with WWF-UK continuing to bang the drum on the issue of sustainable diets (see viewpoint opposite) and some food brands likely to get more involved too (see page 6), expect to hear a lot more about the subject in 2012.



Developing sustainable diets isn't rocket science

says Mark Driscoll, head of the One Planet Food programme at WWF-UK

IT MIGHT not be a piece of cake, but developing sustainable diets certainly isn't rocket science. The ethos is: healthy people, healthy planet. In other words, what's often good for our waistlines and the health of a nation is good for the health of the planet too. The term 'sustainable diets' has been banded about a fair bit over the last two years. There is now an increasing body of evidence that suggests it could be a win-win both in terms of reducing food's impact on the global environment and reducing the health (and consequent financial impacts) on our global economy - especially with an estimated one billion people who are obese. And yet, despite this, governments and the food industry, including the retail sector, have singularly failed to take the issue seriously.

The food industry, which is reluctant to stick its head above the parapet on this issue, tells us that whilst they recognise the importance of the issue, it's for governments to define the key principles of a sustainable diet. Meanwhile, the Government says it doesn't want to tell people what to eat. We are stuck between a rock and a hard place, with no-one taking this issue seriously, whilst consumers are left confused about how to make the best choices for their health and for the environment.

So what are sustainable diets and why is WWF concerned about this as an issue? Although there are different interpretations (and that's part of the problem), sustainable diets should be diets with low environmental impacts and which contribute to food security and healthy lives for present and future generations. Sustainable diets should be better for your pocket, culturally acceptable, safe, nutritionally adequate and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems on which our food system depends.

As John Beddington's Foresight Report on the Future of Food and Farming highlighted, our food system is broken and unsustainable. Food is at the heart of many of the key environmental challenges WWF is most concerned about: climate change, water scarcity and habitat and biodiversity loss. That's why we believe we have to produce food more efficiently whilst also tackling consumption drivers such as food waste and high-impact diets, particularly in the developed world. Our

Living Planet Report (2010) highlighted we are consuming the resources equivalent to 1.5 planets – we are eating into the planet's natural capital. So we need a radical shift in the way we connect with, think about and eat our food.

It is for these reasons that WWF has been working on sustainable diets, launching our Livewell Report earlier this year. Working with the Rowett Institute, we adapted the Government's own healthy eating advice, The Eatwell Plate, so it takes into account environmental considerations (most notably greenhouse gas emissions), and produced something we called the Livewell Plate. An example Livewell 2020 menu demonstrates that radical changes in the diet are not required; it's not about eliminating food stuffs and it can also be cheaper. There are no surprises and it's not rocket science, promoting simple messages such as eating more fresh fruit and vegetables whilst eating less meat. Above all, the benefits to the health of our planet, the narrowing our waistlines and ultimately the money in our pockets are huge.

So will 2012 be the year of the 'sustainable diet'? It should be, but the signs are not great. Despite the evidence and growing threats to global food security, the Government continues to lack any clear strategic direction around food security and sustainability, let alone giving priority to and promoting sustainable diet concepts in policies and programmes in the agriculture, food, environment, trade, education and health sectors.

Whilst the food retail sector has made some strides in terms of tackling issues such as food waste, which remains a serious issue (40% of all food grown globally is wasted) these are arguably easier wins; in years to come the sector will therefore need to step up to the mark and tackle issues such as sustainable consumption. More needs to be done to influence and inform consumer behaviour, unsustainable choices should be removed from the supermarket shelves and, above all, retailers need to work with governments, civil society and others to help define the key principles of a sustainable diet. Our initial work on the issue through Livewell demonstrates that what we eat can be accessible, affordable, sustainable, and healthy – we hope to build on it.

Food industry sets bold target for sustainable growth

THE FOOD and Drink Federation has unveiled an ambitious vision to deliver 20% sustainable growth in food and drink manufacturing by 2020. The vision builds on work already underway to unlock the potential of the industry in key areas such as securing new export markets and ensuring that the food and drink industry can attract and retain new talent.

In drawing up its vision, the FDF asked accountancy firm Grant Thornton to conduct independent research into what FDF members thought were the major opportunities and barriers to growth in the

industry. The opportunities cited included the strong reputation of British products around the world and the growing demand for added value products in developing markets and health and wellbeing products with an ageing population. Among the challenges identified were volatile commodity prices and the burdensome regulatory environment in the UK.

"The research findings constitute a powerful case for our industry to be central to the UK's economic recovery whilst continuing to make a real and unique difference to a more sustainable future for society and to individual health and wellbeing," said FDF president Jim Moseley. As part of the vision, the FDF reaffirmed its commitment to delivering its five-fold environmental ambition, which includes achieving a 35% absolute reduction in CO2 emissions by 2020 against a 1990 baseline and sending zero food and packaging waste to landfill at the latest by 2015.

"Blatant disregard" for sustainable fish

THE SOURCING of sustainable fish remains a key issue for some supermarkets, but others still have a "blatant disregard" for the issue.

The latest Supermarket Seafood Survey, carried out by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) shows the Co-operative and Marks and Spencer tying for top spot. Both will be able to display a 'gold rating' at fish counters.

However, top place didn't mean they were perfect. The Co-op has good labelling and sells nothing from the MCS Fish to Avoid list, but their policy only reflects own brand seafood, and not all fish sold in store. M&S, meanwhile, has the most comprehensive seafood policy of all retailers covering all fish sold in store, but their labelling policy needs to be improved.

Sainsbury's and Waitrose were awarded silver for their policies, while the likes of Morrisons, Tesco and Iceland scored reasonably well, but not well enough to meet the 'bronze' criteria.

Although it finished last, Booths, new to the survey this year, is highlighted by MCS as having the most potential to move up the seafood league table. Booths sold nothing from the MCS Fish to Avoid List and almost half of their fish sold was from the Fish to Eat List; however a lack of policy let the retailer down.

MCS said it was disappointed that Asda, Aldi, Lidl, Farm foods, Spar and Budgens failed to return the survey.

Dibb named head of Food Ethics Council



THE FOOD Ethics Council has named Sue Dibb as its new executive director. Dibb is currently chair of the Brighton Food Partnership and has previously worked with the

Sustainable Development Commission, the National Consumer Council and the Food Commission. She most recently headed the Sustainable Development Commission's Enabling Sustainable Lives team, responsible

for advising Government on the need for a vision and strategy for its sustainable and farming policy and action to catalyse sustainable diets (see analysis pg 8).

Commenting on her appointment, Dibb said: "I am delighted to be taking up this role at such a crucial time. Rising food prices and tightened budgets are putting pressure all along the supply chain, from producers to retailers and consumers. The Food Ethics Council plays an important role in ensuring that the food system works for fairness and justice, not just the financial bottom line."



BRITISH IS BEST. When it comes to the crunch, more than half of consumers prefer to buy British apples over imported produce, according to new research from Sainsbury's. Almost three quarters (73%) of Brits agreed that buying British produce is important and 58% would prefer to pick-up a British apple at the supermarket and support local growers and producers.

Over a third (34%), meanwhile, said they're more inclined to seek out a British apple since the economic downturn.



Fruit for thought

Footprint Forum: 23 November 2011

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 final forum of 2011 – right down to the format of the event.

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 there are millions of people reliant on agriculture – the irony being that half of the world's hungriest people are from farming families."

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 become what Crowther sees as a "springboard to wider economic development".

Indeed, if prior to the Forum, anyone in the audience who underestimated the reliance of UK food supply 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



Food and drink brands face 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.

Continued from page 11



Richard Reed - Innocent Co-founder

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

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.

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

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 fairtrade products. 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. 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 7), 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?

This Footprint Forum was organised for the foodservice industry, and was first reported in Foodservice Footprint's December issue.

All change please

Encouraging consumers to behave more sustainably is never easy but, with their reach and influence, retailers and food brands are well placed to succeed where governments have failed, says *David Burrows*.



HERMIONE TAYLOR believes in sustainability. So much so that she decided to cycle to Morocco – “my dream destination” – instead of doing what any normal person would have done and bought the cheapest flight. It’s a long way, and quite a feat, so having been harassed by friends in the past to sponsor them for running 26.2 miles in various marathons, she felt justified in asking for something in return for her 2,181 miles in the saddle. The cause had to be green – “I’d just finished a Masters in environmental policy” – but her friends were strapped for cash, and she felt uncomfortable about asking for money. So she tried something different.

“For the two months that I was cycling to Morocco, over two hundred friends sponsored me and Scott [Hunter, her co-cyclist], but they pledged actions rather than money,” she explains. “Our friends chose from a range of carbon saving actions, from making draught excluders or washing their clothes at 30 degrees to cutting down on burgers or switching to renewable electricity suppliers. Rather than raising cash, we all cut carbon.”

The idea is beautifully simple, yet astoundingly successful. Taylor and Hunter’s sponsors saved over 16 tonnes of carbon: that’s the equivalent of 83 flights from London to Morocco. What’s more, almost three quarters of the sponsors said they’d carry on acting to cut their carbon beyond the two months.

Taylor is the founder of The DoNation website. With a little thought, and no budget, she could well achieve what governments and NGOs have spent many years, and countless millions, largely failing to do: encourage people to move from being willing to live more sustainably to actually doing it.

The Government, among others, has tried to encourage more action. However, it has often struggled to push the right buttons. The last Government pressed the one marked ‘self-detonate’ in 2009 with a series of ads, which reportedly cost £6m, based on nursery rhymes for its Act On CO2 campaign. One ad showed two children peering into a stone well amid an arid, post-climate-change landscape. The text read: “Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. There was none as extreme weather due to climate change had caused a drought.” The footnote

was: “It’s our children that will really pay the price.” The ads were subsequently banned by the Advertising Standards Authority following a series of complaints that they exaggerated possible future scenarios.

So, how can you successfully nudge people in the direction of living more sustainably and what examples are there of grocery brands driving positive behaviour change?

“There’s no silver bullet, especially when it comes to using tools such as social media and virals,” says Steve Connor, chief executive at Creative Concern – a communications agency devoted to sustainable development. “But we know that everyone’s searching for porn and cheap flights rather than for information on sustainability [according to Google Trends], so we need to cut through that and take more risks if we are going to encourage more urgent action. We need to be more creative – we need to make change irresistible,” he says.

Currently, it’s far from it. The publication of emails from renowned climate scientists a couple of years ago didn’t help the ‘green’ living agenda, and neither did the negativity following the Copenhagen climate summit,

Continued from page 13

or the financial downturn during which consumers are still struggling to make ends meet. But for some there has been a far more obvious, if controversial, reason for the lack of inspiring social change: there's been too much talk of 'green'. "We need to shut up about being green and start appealing to more people about the things that interest them; self interest can get an enormous amount done," says Caroline Fiennes, executive director at the Global Cool Foundation. Fiennes says that for too long, sustainability campaigns geared to changing behaviour have been dreamt up by the greenies, for the greenies.

A campaign that has notably bucked this trend is the 'turn to 30' campaign run by Procter and Gamble. Laundry habits have been at the centre of many successful behaviour change campaigns, with Unilever also having encouraged a significant drop in pre-washing among its Turkish consumers thanks to a long-standing marketing effort and new product development.

Taking forward the learnings from that project, along with hoards of other consumer research, Unilever has now come up with a guideline for encouraging more sustainable living habits. Connor's call for irresistibility is in there, along with four other 'levers for change'. These include the need to make campaigns easy to understand, easy to carry out, rewarding and habitual. "In the past, campaigns have perhaps focussed too much on driving awareness, with not enough [emphasis] on how the consumer can change and how to make it become habit," says Unilever VP for sustainability, Karen Hamilton. "What we've found is that you have a better chance of changing behaviour if you use all five levers."

Hamilton is keen for the messaging to adopt a more positive tone. A recent study by the Futures Company found there is a gap between good intentions and taking action. "The doom and gloom stories won't help to bridge that gap," she adds.

As well as positive, the messaging also needs to be simple. Consumers already have so much playing on their minds, and so little time to spend in the supermarket, that plying them with ethical messaging is likely to serve only to confuse. Labels for carbon footprints and the like aren't really helping either, says Heather Mak, a specialist in brands and consumers working for think tank SustainAbility. "Carbon is still an abstract concept. Tesco has done its carbon labels, but they are not on every product. It's had expensive education campaigns and green

Clubcard points, but in front of everything else on pack it's hard to make it relevant to consumers."

One example of how it can be done, says Mak, is in the US where the website 'Office Depot', which sells office equipment, has introduced a novel method to help its consumers who want to buy more sustainably. The company has sorted items into 'light green' and 'dark green' baskets, depending on how sustainable they are; at checkout customers with light green products are simply asked whether they'd like to "upgrade" to a 'dark green' product, explains Mak. There is no reason why it couldn't be applied to supermarket shopping, especially as more and more sales are driven online.

"Online provides a much richer environment, where people can spend more time examining the products before they buy," she adds.

Some companies are trying to go a step further through choice editing products based on sustainability criteria. It's an area that's likely to receive much more attention in the years to come as food retailers and manufacturers take on more responsibility for influencing change. Already, consumers are asking for the supermarkets to do more behind the scenes so they don't have to worry about the choices they are making in the aisles.

"People are concerned about the planet, people and the future – and that hasn't



WE'LL DO THE HEAVY LIFTING. M&S says its customers want changes to be made behind the scenes, such as sourcing sustainable fish, so they don't have to worry about tough ethical decisions when in store.

changed,” says Mike Barry, Marks and Spencer head of sustainability. “What has changed is that they now want us to do more of the ‘heavy lifting’ for them. Stocking only free range eggs or [eventually] sustainable fish means that people don’t have to think about it – it becomes a brand choice for them.”

M&S is already winning over the marketing experts. “When you enter their stores, all the Plan A messaging reassures you that M&S has addressed all those complicated, messy ethical and environmental issues on your behalf,” says Ed Gillespie, co-founder of Futerra.



Making salt reduction fun

Some believe that the best way of encouraging behaviour change among food shoppers might be to play the ‘health card’ – an easier concept to understand than, say, carbon footprint labels. Success has come in all shapes and sizes for those using this technique. The UK has relied on traffic light labelling and Guideline Daily Allowances. In Canada, meanwhile, Unilever has had success with something a little less controversial. ‘Salty the saltshaker’ has become an “internet star”, being used to inject “fun” into the message that salt had been cut by 25% in the Knorr Sidekicks range. “Technically, we can decrease the salt levels, but our customers get worried that the products may taste worse – and we’ve struggled with that,” says VP for sustainability Karen Hamilton. A series of films showing Salty coping with his new, under-utilised life has endeared him to a much wider public than expected. Salty has become a worldwide internet sensation, with over 13,000 Facebook fans and more than 700,000 YouTube views, showing that humour can often be the best way to make a serious subject more palatable.

However, choice editing is an area where businesses and brands have to tread very carefully – the emphasis is very much on an arm around the shoulder, rather than a shove in the appropriate direction. “I don’t think you’ll see dramatic change,” admits Barry. “There will be a little more information each year.”

Will that be enough to ensure we live within the means of one planet, as opposed to the three planets WWF suggests we need? Some environmental campaigners suggest not, and demand more dramatic action. However, it’s the direction of change that’s critical at

the moment, says Christopher Rootes, professor of environmental politics and political sociology at the University of Kent.

“There’s a tendency by some campaigners and even government to hit the panic button too hard, rather than realise more practical improvements. We need more positive change and we need campaigns [to show] this is the smart, modern thing to do. You could say we should have started yesterday, or even 10 years ago, but we can only start from where we are. The pace will need to quicken at some point but let’s keep moving people in the right direction.”

A recipe for success

The most successful campaigns to date have often involved a number of stakeholders, including businesses, government and NGOs. Throw a cost saving in for customers and there is real driver for change. Just look at what happened in 2009 when Tesco went all out to sell 10 million low-energy lightbulbs. The retailer said its customers wanted fighting climate change to be easier and more affordable, so Tesco undercut its rivals and communicated to shoppers that each bulb switched could save them £9 a year. The result? Tesco sold more bulbs in seven days in 2009 than it had in the whole of 2006. Incidentally, the move pre-empted EU legislation to phase out higher watt bulbs.

How to make behaviour change hot

Communicating to the masses to change their behaviour isn’t easy – especially given the scale of change experts say is now needed. But with their reach and influence, retailers and food brands have a big role to play. So how do you make a campaign hot, like ‘turn to 30’, rather than turn off, like ‘Act on CO2’?

Stop talking green.

“We’ve only got 30% of people interested enough to make changes, and that’s because we haven’t made things compelling enough. We need to appeal to people’s self-interest.”

Caroline Fiennes, Global Cool Foundation

Create the right conditions.

“The challenge is not about changing people, but of creating the right conditions under which people can change their routine practices.”

Professor David Uzzell, University of Surrey

Get emotional.

“Make the campaigns beautiful. Take risks. And be emotional rather than rational.”

Steve Connor, Creative Concern

Be specific.

“You need to understand the barrier that is preventing change in the first place. Then you need to target very specific motivation points and make your communication personal. Finally, you need to ensure that change is sustained.”

Stefano Giolito, Unilever

Use social competition.

“Without question, when people are uncertain, they are more likely to use others’ actions to decide how they themselves should act.”

Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*

Time it right.

“What research into habits shows is that when people have a strong habit [for example driving their car], in the presence of that habit they won’t pay attention to information on any alternative [for example the bus]. We’re trying to identify the times in people’s lives when they are more attentive to that information.”

Lorraine Whitmarsh, Cardiff University



2020 Vision

Sainsbury's is the latest supermarket to launch a sustainability plan, following in the footsteps of M&S and Asda. Do all food businesses need to map out their future aspirations on such issues and, if so, what separates the greenest from the grey. *Nick Hughes* reports.

WHEN MARKS & Spencer launched its Plan A back in 2007, it set itself the ultimate goal of becoming the world's most sustainable major retailer. Four years on and Plan A has put M&S firmly at the forefront of the sustainable retailing revolution. But more and more peers are following its lead and putting sustainability at the heart of their future business strategies.

In October of this year, Sainsbury's unveiled its '20 by 20 Sustainability Plan' which sets out 20 ambitious goals to help customers make more nutritious, sustainable and ethical purchasing decisions; Asda has a

Sustainability 2.0 document which details its environmental sustainability targets for 2010-2015, while Tesco, although it does not have a formal sustainability plan, has pledged to become a carbon neutral business by 2050.

On the supplier side, Unilever, in its Sustainable Living Plan, pledges to double in size at the same time as halving its environmental footprint by 2020. In early 2009, Coca Cola Enterprises convened an environmental summit to set out global goals for corporate responsibility and a road map for achieving them by the year 2020. Coke labelled the resultant plan 'Commitment 2020'.

These are just a handful of examples of documented plans that grocery businesses have developed to deal with the environmental, social and commercial challenges facing the industry. But what makes a great sustainability plan and should all grocery businesses have one?

"Not necessarily," says Dan Crossley, principal sustainability advisor at Forum for the Future, in response to the latter. Although he's keen to stress that it's crucial for all businesses to be thinking about sustainability, for smaller businesses Crossley believes "it

might make more sense not to have huge bibles written but to have something internally that they can base their thinking around".

For larger players such as Sainsbury's and Unilever, however, Crossley is strongly in favour of them publicly documenting how they plan to move towards a long-term sustainable business model. "A sustainability plan binds them to targets which people can hold them accountable to," he says. "That public-facing aspect is something we encourage because without that there's a danger you can miss targets or get on with stuff quietly and not be held to account."

There is also a strong business case for putting plans in writing, says Toby Pickard, senior sustainability analyst at IGD: "The food and grocery industry is an extremely competitive one, and sustainability has become a new area of differentiation among retailers and manufacturers," he points out. "Those that don't have a sustainability plan run the risk of being left behind."

One need only look at M&S for an example of how sustainability makes good business sense. The net benefits accrued from Plan A have increased to over £70m this year from £50m last year thanks to a combination of

efficiency savings and new business.

Aside from looking good to outsiders, having a documented sustainability plan is also hugely important for getting buy-in from internal stakeholders, says Crossley. "It's crucial to have something to motivate and inspire your employees and potential future employees; something that shows them the future direction the company is going in and what the company is trying to achieve. Little touches like everyone's business card at M&S having the Plan A logo on the back and M&S offering free insulation and energy checks to their employees. It may not have immediate direct commercial benefit to the business, but in terms of building up the brand and the loyalty to it that's incredibly powerful."

As Mike Barry, head of sustainable business at M&S and the brains behind Plan A suggests, a few dedicated people working on sustainability does not a sustainable company make. "It's all well and good having a few good people working within the business on this issue [sustainability], but Plan A was a way of engaging the hearts and minds of all employees," he explains. "This is a journey for all of us."

One of the successes of Plan A is that it is already woven into the fabric of the M&S business. Indeed, a key characteristic of a great sustainability plan is that it has a link to the business's core strategy, says Crossley. Sainsbury's chief executive Justin King describes 20 by 20 as "the cornerstone of our business strategy", while Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan is the company's strategy, according to chief executive Paul Polman.

In an interview with Forum for the Future's deputy chief executive Sally Uren earlier this year, Polman said the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan "is not a CSR type appendix to our business. Most businesses operate by saying how can I use society and the environment to be successful? We're saying the opposite; we're saying how can we contribute to society and the environment to be successful?"

So what makes a great sustainability plan? Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all template, but the best plans do share certain characteristics, explains Crossley. The first is that they should be holistic, tackling a breadth of sustainability issues and understanding the different range of issues that the company impacts on, both directly and indirectly across the value chain. Plan A, for example, encompasses targets on everything from developing sustainability frameworks for its food suppliers to improving the fuel efficiency of its delivery fleet. As M&S's Barry points

out: "We have always been conscious not to make Plan A niche. It's not about a small range of Fairtrade products in part of the store – that might have been enough 10 years ago but now it's about systematic change."

Another key characteristic is around the scope of a business's ambition. "This means having bold targets and big audacious goals that will inspire both external and internal people to really set the agenda for where they're going," says Crossley. "Sainsbury's 20 by 20 Plan has some pretty bold targets in it while Tesco has got some audacious targets in place around carbon reduction."

Among the ambitious targets set out by Sainsbury's is for sales of fairly traded products to hit £1bn by 2020, from a 2010 benchmark of £280m, and to have in place 100% traceability of key raw materials within its supply chains.

Other key characteristics of a great plan, according to Crossley, are "creating with your eyes open rather than creating something in a vacuum" and "giving evidence of how you are embedding the plan into the business". IGD's Pickard throws another criterion into the mix – one that has been integral to the development of Plan A, in particular. "Plans should aim to be flexible and adaptable as sustainability continues to be a fast-paced agenda," he says. "It's important that companies can evolve and respond to new developments and challenges."

With the sustainability agenda moving so quickly static plans simply won't do. M&S started out with 100 commitments in 2007 and added a further 80 in 2010. As of 2011 it has achieved 95 while 77 are on target, one, concerning filling up lorries with bio-diesel, is on hold until more sustainable sources of crop-derived biodiesel are available, and seven are currently behind schedule. "We hold our hands up when we need to," says Barry. "Evidence and reporting is critical [...] We're not a business that will slide commitments out of the door and move on to others."

Richard Gillies, director of Plan A, CSR and sustainable business at M&S admits in the company's 'How We Do Business Report 2011' that there are some areas where progress hasn't been as good as M&S would have liked. The business has had to evolve its plan to become carbon neutral in response to changes in government policy on renewable energy and has also struggled to identify the steps to take to meet its water efficiency target; although it now has a robust plan to achieve its 20% reduction target by 2012.

The important point is that Plan A will never be completed as such; it will simply adapt and evolve to meet the constantly developing sustainability agenda. "We see Plan A as a staging post and not as a destination," says Gillies. It's a lesson that any grocery business planning for a sustainable future would do well to heed.

Puma presents a glimpse of the future

Sustainability plans may be the flavour of the month for grocery businesses but one fmcg brand has taken the transparency agenda to the next level. In May, Puma announced the results of its first ever Environmental Profit and Loss Account, setting a new benchmark in corporate environmental reporting. The company published an economic valuation of the environmental impacts caused by greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption along its value chain and found that raw material production had the greatest impact on emissions. Future accounts will include further environmental key performance indicators, followed by social and economic impacts in later stages of development.

Although Puma is setting a new benchmark for operational transparency, the shift towards full disclosure has been happening in grocery for some time already, says Dan Crossley, principal sustainability advisor at Forum for the Future. "The move on transparency is gathering pace. Whether that be Asda showing garment manufacturers in Bangladesh live on the web or products that you can log on to a website, put your bar code in and find out which farm the product comes from or where the water comes from."

Crossley believes the Puma model of environmental accounting is likely to catch on in the grocery sector. "Because of the fundamental reliance food brands have on the environment to survive I can certainly see us moving towards a world where the impacts of brands are becoming more and more transparent in the future."

EU ban on misleading claims

HEALTH CLAIMS relating to energy drinks and green tea are set to be outlawed after EU Member States adopted a definitive list of claims that can be made about food and drink products. The list has been drawn up by the European Food Standards Authority (EFSA) in order to protect consumers against misleading health claims.

With one batch of verdicts still to be published, the success rate of claims applications stands at just 20%. Energy drinks have been one of the major casualties of the process with claims linking taurine, caffeine and sugar beet with increased energy all having been dismissed by the EFSA. Digestive and heart health products, including probiotic yoghurts, yoghurt drinks and cereals have also failed to convince the Authority of their functional

benefits, while a claim linking green tea with maintenance of normal blood pressure was among others rejected.

"It has been a long time coming, but consumers will soon be able to choose what products to buy based on fact, not fiction," said Which? executive director Richard Lloyd. "Manufacturers now need hard evidence, not just clever marketing, to promote the health benefits of food and drinks."

The list of approved claims will now go to the European Parliament for a three month period of scrutiny. Provided there is no challenge, it will then be published in the Official Journal. Once the list comes into effect, companies will have six months to remove the claim or withdraw affected products from the market.

Responsibility Deal soft on industry

THE HEALTH Select Committee has criticised the government's Responsibility Deal for putting too much power in the hands of the food industry. The Committee, chaired by former Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell, said in a report that "partnership with commercial organisations had a place", but added that "those with a financial interest must not be allowed to set the [obesity] agenda".

The Responsibility Deal was launched by Health Secretary Andrew Lansley in March of this year with the aim of sparing businesses legislation provided they voluntarily act to improve the health profile of food. Signatories include Asda, Tesco, PepsiCo and United Biscuits.

The Committee added that it is "unconvinced that the new Responsibility Deal will be effective in resolving issues such as obesity and alcohol abuse" and called for the Department of Health to set out clearly how progress towards the Deal's goals will be monitored and tougher regulation applied if necessary.

Responding to the Committee's report, Food and Drink Federation communications director Terry Jones said the Deal was not a silver bullet for solving obesity.

See opposite for an analysis of the Government's health and obesity policy.



Bend it like Beckham. Sainsbury's has launched the first phase of its David Beckham marketing campaign, which it hopes will inspire children to lead healthier lifestyles. The film focuses on Dave Clarke, the Paralympics GB Beijing 5-a-side football captain, as he coaches the blindfolded Beckham through a set of drills. The campaign aims to drive further awareness of the Sainsbury's Million Kids Challenge, which was launched in April this year and aims to give kids of all ages and abilities the opportunity to have a go at different Paralympic sports.

Pulling your weight

The Government's healthy eating policies have been widely criticised for leaving too much power in the hands of the food industry. *Nick Hughes* says some of the targets may be too light, or too ambiguous, but some companies are already going beyond them and showing an appetite for more dramatic change.



IT'S FAIR to say the government's "call to action" on obesity in England received a less than enthusiastic response when it first surfaced in October. "Worthless, regurgitated, patronising rubbish" is how Jamie Oliver described the 'healthy lives, healthy people: a call to action on obesity in England' document. "Hopeless" and "meaningless" was the damning verdict of the National Obesity Forum.

In opposition, Health Secretary Andrew Lansley promised a bold new approach to Public Health. In the Conservative Party's Healthier Nation manifesto, published in January 2010, he talked of using "social psychology" and "behavioural economics" to better understand why people make unhealthy choices, and then nudge them in

the right direction rather than preaching to them about good and bad foods.

Fast forward two years and the acquisition of power, albeit shared power, appears to have neutered the party's desire to adopt a radical approach to tackling obesity. All talk of social psychology and behavioural economics was absent from the obesity paper. In its place was nebulous discourse about "a new focus and a new level of ambition" and "a life course approach to obesity".

The paper also drew criticism for being too soft on the food industry. When he was Shadow Health Secretary, Lansley promised to refrain from legislation so long as the industry acted voluntarily to improve the health profile of food. The upshot of this promise was the Responsibility Deal,

launched in March 2011, which asked food companies to pledge their support to a series of actions on health and wellbeing.

But the Responsibility Deal has also been denounced by health campaigners for being toothless. The Children's Food Campaign slammed it as "irresponsible" and "inadequate" pointing out that the pledges are minor and have not been universally adopted.

With the London 2012 Olympics fast approaching a light will be shined on the health of the British people. But is the coalition's obesity strategy a non-starter and is the food industry really stepping up to the plate where healthy eating is concerned?

While the Responsibility Deal has succeeded in getting food industry players to commit to common goals, the scope of its

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ambition has, to date, been disappointingly limited. A pledge to remove all artificial trans fats by 2011, for example, is hardly groundbreaking when you consider the vast majority of companies removed trans fats some years ago.

In fact, a deal to voluntarily remove trans fats was actually agreed in 2007 when the British Retail Consortium announced that most major retailers, including Tesco, Asda, Boots, Iceland, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Waitrose would remove trans fats from their own brand products by the end of 2007. It's reasonable to argue that for the vast majority of food suppliers the pledge is obsolete and is only applicable to some small and medium-sized companies, the majority of whom are not signatories to the Responsibility Deal.

Another key pledge is for businesses to commit to salt reduction targets for 2012 that will collectively deliver a further 15% reduction on 2010 targets. Again, these targets are not new; in fact the Food Standards Agency established them in 2008, and by last year not only had many manufacturers hit the 2010 targets, they were also well on their way to hitting 2012 targets a year early.

There are even rumours circulating that the government is planning to ditch the salt reduction targets altogether next year in favour of calorie reduction targets. Calorie reduction is a major preoccupation of the government's obesity strategy. One of the government's aims is "to shape the food and drink environment to favour healthier choices, encouraging and enabling the population to reduce our collective energy intake by five billion calories a day to bring us back into energy balance and help those that need to lose weight to do so".

This call to arms on calories might have carried more weight had, on the same day the document was published, the government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition not published new guidelines on daily recommended calorie intakes, which revised the number upwards. "It gives out entirely the wrong message," fumed National

Obesity Forum Chairman, professor David Haslam. "People are going to think that they can eat that little bit more. If anything, that will add to the obesity problem."

European regulation also threatens to derail the calorie reduction agenda. In opposition, Lansley declared his intention to mandate the display of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) on food packaging. The UK government, however, was unable to sufficiently exert its influence in Brussels and the final EU proposal on nutritional labelling requires only that energy content and amounts of key nutrients – fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates,

in the big four supermarkets offering an unprecedented level of promotional deals with shoppers being bombarded with incentives to buy more than they need in every aisle. If the government is serious about reducing calorie consumption, clamping down on the BOGOF and X for Y deals that encourage shoppers to over-consume would be a good place to start.

If all of this seems unduly negative from a food industry perspective then there is plenty of cause for optimism too. There are numerous examples of companies doing the right thing on health and wellbeing without

a nudge from policy. Businesses have made a number of individual pledges as part of the Responsibility Deal. Heineken is working to remove 100 million units of alcohol from the UK market each year by lowering the strength of one of its main brands, while Asda has vowed to remove the display of alcohol from its store foyers.

Outside of the Deal, Waitrose launched a 270-strong Love Life range of "nutritionally balanced" products in June to meet demand from customers who wanted a boost in wholefood ingredients and to avoid saturated fats in their diets. Morrisons, Waitrose and PepsiCo, meanwhile, are part of an industry working group that has drawn up recommendations on ways to reduce the energy density of foods. These include increasing the fruit and vegetable

content of composite foods such as ready meals.

Cynics might argue that industry action is solely aimed at getting ahead of the legislative curve, but that would be to discredit some of the genuinely innovative actions that are taking place across the food sector. However, the introduction in Denmark, Hungary and France of taxes on certain foods containing saturated fat or considered high in added sugar, contrasts starkly with the light touch approach being pursued in the UK. It's not necessarily the wrong approach but with the Olympics on the horizon a more decisive call to arms, both from government and industry, is needed in 2012 if the UK's obesity strategy is to deliver medal-winning results.



Health Secretary Andrew Lansley's Responsibility Deal has been criticised for being too soft on the food industry.

sugars, protein and salt – are stated in a legible tabular form on the food packaging, together and in the same field of vision; not on the front-of-pack nor in Guideline Daily Allowance or traffic light form as the British government has been advocating.

Progress, therefore, rests on food suppliers' willingness to voluntarily encourage consumers to reduce their calorie intake. But asking food companies to sell fewer calories is a bit like asking Turkey's to vote for Christmas. Especially in these austere times, when supermarket price wars mean margins are being squeezed to the bone, the only way to make more money is often to sell more units of food.

The latest war on price has resulted



The next **green** thing: **GM**

IT SEEMS perverse to identify GM food as the next green thing, such is the resistance to genetically modified organisms that persists among environmentalists. But as the global population breaches the seven billion mark, and with a further two billion increase expected by 2050, renewed concern over how to feed the world looks set to reignite the GM debate.

GM has never been seen as a 'green' technology per se, but if proponents are to be believed the higher, more consistent yields it can deliver make GM the only plausible, long-term solution to a sustainable global food system.

In the UK, the tide of public opinion has been against GM ever since 'Frankenstein food' stories began emerging in the tabloid press in the mid-to-late nineties. However, recent research carried out on behalf of the Crop Protection Agency found a softening in consumer attitudes with 35% of people saying they would support GM foods being stocked on supermarket shelves, while 44% of people would back GM food if the technology kept food prices down.

Politically, there remains little appetite

for GM. Currently just one GM crop – Monsanto's MON810 maize variety – is cultivated commercially in the EU, while earlier this year Euro MPs voted to give EU member states more flexibility to restrict or ban genetically modified crops on environmental or health grounds.

The UK government appears to retain a more open mind on the issue. The Environmental Audit Committee recently invited the Agricultural Biotechnology Council and anti-GM group GeneWatch to present to the group's Sustainable Food Enquiry on the subject of 'to what extent could GM crops be seen as a solution to providing sustainably produced food for the world'. The Agricultural Biotechnology Council failed to appear at the enquiry but Dr Helen Wallace, director of GeneWatch, said she remained sceptical that GM had any role to play.

In addition to age-old fears concerning cross contamination and patent control, Wallace pointed out that in the United States and South America, where GM crops such as maize have been farmed for years, there has been a significant growth in so-called super weeds, which are developing resistance to herbicides and thus require farmers to use

additional, more expensive chemicals.

"You are seeing a system where farmers are becoming trapped into paying for increasing seed price hikes, increasing chemicals, and also having these very significant problems impacting on their farming," said Wallace.

In some crops, GM is now the norm. Take soy, for example. With 77% of the world's soy now genetically modified, it is becoming increasingly difficult to source the GM-free animal feed that some supermarkets demand is fed to livestock such as chickens. Force-feeding is perhaps not the best way to bring GM to the market, but it's a reality.

One of the major issues holding further GM technology and expansion back is that the really great technological leaps forward, that proponents promise will set it apart from conventional crop breeding, have yet to materialise. Despite huge investment in R&D, the genuinely game-changing advances in salt-tolerant or drought-tolerant crops that could have huge ramifications for African crop production remain elusive. If that situation were to change, however, it surely can't be long before GM is allowed to come in from the cold.

Dear reader,

Bring on Christmas. Let's get it over with and count the cash. Or not. I suppose it depends on who you listen to. My heart says ONS but my head says BRC. The Office of National Statistics is, according to the British Retail Consortium, over-egging the pudding somewhat with the value of sales up 3.3% on November a year ago; the BRC puts the figure at 0.7%. The way they were queuing for bratwurst on Edinburgh's Princes Street at the weekend makes me wonder whether the BRC have got it wrong. Or were they all there for the sausages rather than the early-season sales? When it comes to food, the traditional gluttony may well prevail – but only just. Over at the marketplace that is Morrisons, customers can pick up all the things they need for a

Christmas dinner for £3 a person. To save extra cash, however, many could well do the unthinkable and ditch December 25th staples such as sprouts and puddings. Mince pies and cranberry sauce are also on the endangered list according to Morrisons.

Really? Mince pies rarely get chance to cool off in our house, but I'd admit the odd sprout is often left over (not that they aren't splendidly prepared by Mrs GG). We try and keep leftovers to a minimum, but even those scrimping to cut out sprouts say they will have leftovers. Why buy as much?

Rather than cut out some favourites, just buy a little less of everything is what the likes of WWF are telling us to do. They're not just panda experts you know; they've developed a

sustainable Christmas menu and, apart from its puns, it seems sensible. Top of the pile is Good King Waste-less (see what I mean?). But that's me. Put me in my store and who am I to suggest a 15lb turkey is not suitable for a Christmas meal pour deux? But perhaps I could give a little advice on what to do with the leftovers – that would be a sustainable approach, wouldn't it? I could even do it through Twitter, but I'm not sure my followers would trust my culinary advice. But the likes of Tesco could; it has an SOS Twitter feed to help customers deal with last-minute nightmares. Could this be expanded to help them deal with all those leftover sprouts?

Green Grosser

Checkout...

Basket cases. Shoppers in Wales have been half-inching baskets from Morrisons instead of paying 5p for a bag. The bag tax was introduced in October to help reduce litter and cut down on waste which, according to Morrisons, many customers have bought in to (not literally though – they're bringing their own bags). Some aren't. In just under two months, half of the store's baskets have been pilfered – about 150. The matter was being “urgently investigated”, but in the meantime thieves and those forgetting their own bags can rest assured that another 300 baskets have been ordered.

And on the drums is... Peter Marks, group CEO of The Co-operative. Marks and colleagues, right, have launched a charity single to raise money for Mencap. Marks is joined by food supply chain boss Lee Braddock and others in their cover of Take That's 'Greatest Day'. To register a Christmas number one they'll have to out-do the likes of Nirvana, The Wombles, some rich kids from Essex and 'whoever won X-Factor'. That line-up suggests that it's unlikely they'll have to call on all six million members to buy the record to end up top of the pops.

Kicking up a stink. A lot of news about eggs, of late. Illegal ones, mainly. The Government couldn't reach an agreement

with Europe on what to do about eggs produced in countries that haven't pulled their weight and phased out battery cages. It's part of an EU Directive that some countries seemed to have ignored. Greece and Italy

are among them, and you could argue they've had more important things on their plate than higher welfare omelettes. Until you realise they've had 12 years to make the necessary adjustments.



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