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COMMENT

Get ready to be grilled about your meat

David Burrows
Editor-in-chief



I HAVE NEVER been a fish-on-a-Friday-steak-on-a-Saturday-joint-on-a-Sunday kinda guy, but I do like meat. The thing is I've gone off it.

In the past couple of years I have not only cooked with more vegetables, but I have also been hit with food envy when eating out and the meals arrive for my vegetarian friends. There is still the odd 20th-century ethical incident (lamb gravy on vegetarian sausages does not a happy vegetarian make), but these are now a rarity.

But because I eat less meat, I want the small amounts I do eat to be the best. Two steaks and a bottle of wine for £25 now make me suspicious rather than salivate. And because I am willing to pay more for meat, I have started asking more questions about it. It's not easy, but I find it easier than when I was buying the steaks on special offer; then I felt I was asking too much - it's cheap so I can't demand it be ethical too.

Just last week, on my way to interview

Peter Kendall (see page 12), I stopped at a service station-cum-farm shop and asked about the sourcing of their bacon and sausages. I felt a little awkward while I waited for the response but, three people and a chef later, it came: the bacon was direct from the farm but the sausages were not. I am not sure where they got the sausages, or why they weren't from the farm, but I chose just the bacon.

I wondered how many other people would be asking the same thing after "horsegate"? Eating less and paying more for my meat has given me the confidence to ask more questions, but whether it's frozen beef lasagne or fresh south Devon fillet steak every customer should feel comfortable asking about the food they are being served. I expect more will do so, but that my veggie friends didn't complain about their lamb gravy shows how reticent diners can be. Foodservice companies can help: if you are proud of your sourcing then why not say so on the menu?

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Have you looked at the labels of the cleaning products under your sink? The labels will often warn that a product can be harmful to people, this is a clear sign to ditch it. The average home has 62 toxic chemicals lurking about; the majority contained within regular household cleaning products. Some potentially harmful chemicals you want to watch out for include phthalates (in fragranced products), triclosan (in liquid dishwashing detergent and hand soap), 2-Butoxyethanol (in multi-purpose cleaners) and chlorine (in toilet bowl cleaners).

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The push for more AD sites

Britain's anaerobic digestion capacity is growing and yet many foodservice companies are still sending food waste to landfill. **David Burrows** looks at the gaps in the UK system.

THERE ARE now 106 anaerobic digestion (AD) plants in the UK, not counting those used in the water industry. They can handle 5.1m tonnes of food waste, turning it into 88MW of electricity and "digestate" (a type of fertiliser). That's double what was available less than two years ago. And yet many companies in the hospitality and foodservice sectors are still sending food waste to landfill. "If you want to divert current food waste [levels] from hospitality to AD, then there's nowhere near enough capacity," explains Peter Charlesworth of the consultants Carbon Statement. "The transportation isn't there either – at least not at the frequencies that restaurants and pubs require."

Charlesworth and his team have been commissioned to map the country's AD capacity and find out where the gaps are. They have already estimated that 50% of food waste from the 12,000 outlets within the Hospitality Carbon Reduction Forum ends up in landfill. This is costing companies thousands in landfill taxes and wasting food that could have been used to generate energy.

"There's a big focus from the industry to improve the amount of food waste recycled but the reality is there's a lack of available AD plants, a lack of cost-effective transport options and a lack of low-enough gate fees, which make it a harder and bigger task to implement," he says. "It's happening but there is much that can be done to accelerate it."

Having mapped the forum members' sites across the UK against existing and planned AD capacity, Charlesworth says it is clear that "there is little co-ordination between the supply of food waste, collection and the positioning of sites". Those on the ground tend to agree – even those that are ahead of the game.

Mitchells & Butlers has 1,500 businesses across the UK, including well-known pub chains such as Harvester and O'Neill's, all of which add up to a "significant volume" of food waste. Nevertheless, 85% is already diverted from landfill and the head of environment, Richard Felgate, hopes to hit 100% within the next 12 months.

Hospitality can be seen as a less attractive – or at least a more expensive – proposition for waste contractors than retailers

"We haven't got far to go, but in some areas there are gaps", he explains. "In the large conurbations it's much easier to access AD, but in the outlying areas the distances to a site can be more of a challenge. At the moment we're struggling to achieve our objective."

He isn't alone. The BaxterStorey co-chief executive John Bennett says finding affordable outlets for food waste is difficult. "Transport and volumes are both issues," he explains.

This is where foodservice and hospitality differ from retail: retail tends to have fewer sites and higher volumes of waste, while in hospitality there are often thousands of sites each creating a small amount of food waste. "At a lot of the sites we operate the quantities collected are relatively low," Bennett says.

For this reason, hospitality can be seen as a less attractive – or at least a more expensive – proposition for waste contractors than retailers. But supermarkets have not been sheltered from problems. Sainsbury's said a couple of years ago that it was "desperate" for greater AD capacity. It eventually took the matter into its own hands: in October it announced an investment in Tamar Energy as part of a project to build 40 new plants

by 2017 with a total capacity of 100MW. Sainsbury's doesn't produce enough waste to keep the sites going on its own, so it'll certainly be looking for partners.

Projects like the Tamar one – which is worth £100m – will help improve access to AD plants for other food companies. "As the number of plants grows, the affordability will improve," says Bennett.

For the moment, the numbers don't always add up. Surpassing the 100-site mark is a milestone, but the food waste industry is in its early stages of development. There is also a lot of confusion over prices and non-transparent commercial models. Gate fees at AD plants can vary from £25 to £47 a tonne, says Charlesworth. "Some of the hidden elements are financing high-rate, high-risk debt models," he explains, "and figures over 20% are not uncommon in financial models I have seen for new plants."

Feedstock supply is the principle risk element in many AD financial models, which again explains why retail firms have been the main suppliers to date. But hospitality-sector food waste is, according to Charlesworth, "the ideal combination" of feedstock for AD plants. "It provides a pretty much ideal mix of food that is really easy for AD operators to use. Much better than lots of one type of food." The bugs, which convert organic matter into biogas, apparently like variety.

The quality of feedstock can vary greatly depending on where the bins are located and how well staff and customers buy in to the system. As Eilidh Brunton, business development executive at the Food Waste Network, explains: "If located back-of-house and fully trained staff are responsible for separating waste into the correct bins, then quality can be very high. Feedstock quality becomes an issue when bins are located front-of-house and consumers are responsible for separation." Packaging can be a problem. "What comes off the de-packager is a porridge of macerated plastic, card and food residues, and finding a home for this can add additional costs for the processor."

Those with suitably uncontaminated feedstock are, however, in a strong position

to negotiate with waste contractors, she adds: they can offer a reliable supply of quality feedstock, which will significantly improve the likelihood of AD plants receiving finance and reduce the cost of the finance.

With this in mind, the hospitality sector is unlikely to follow Sainsbury's lead and invest in its own plants. The big fast-food companies may well have the balance sheets and volume of waste to make it happen, but they'd be hit with the same old barrier: geography.

"Their food waste is spread geographically, so where would the AD facility be sited?" says Mike Read, the head of waste at accountants Grant Thornton. "It would probably make more sense for them work in partnership with their waste collection partners to provide the certainty around feedstock contracts – both in quantum and length – to allow them to finance AD plants. Such plants, anchored by the larger foodservice companies, could also service food from the hospitality and smaller foodservice sector."

The sector wants to use its leverage to encourage AD plant deployment

What hospitality and foodservice sector might lack in big investment and single-site volumes, it makes up for in multi-site and high-quality food waste tonnages. Charlesworth says businesses should use that to their advantage.

"At the moment all of the downstream benefits of waste production are hidden behind the waste transportation companies in the form of bin-lift prices and the benefits of efficient recycling are difficult to link back to the provider of the energy.

"The sector wants to use its leverage to encourage AD plant deployment, make efficiencies end to end in the waste industry and to link returns for food waste to energy price rises in the future."

For an exclusive Q&A with Eilidh Brunton from the Food Waste Network, go to www.foodservicefootprint.com/category/features-2/interviews

FOOTPRINT AWARDS 2013 SHORTLIST



We are delighted to announce the shortlist for the 2013 Footprint Awards. Companies are placed in alphabetical order and the final positions will be announced at the Footprint Awards Dinner on May 23rd after the judges have made their final assessment. Certain categories contain larger numbers of entries and this reflects where scores have been tied after the first round.

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources Award

Brakes
Samsung
The London Linen Group

Innovations in Packaging Award

Delphis Eco
Vegware

Waste Management and Reduction Award

Mitchells and Butlers with Biffa
Nestlé Professional
Reynolds
Sodexo UK & Ireland

Environmentally Efficient Logistics Award

Compass Group UK & Ireland
Creed Foodservice
The National Trust with Prestige Purchasing

Sustainable Catering Equipment Manufacturer Award

Dawson Foodservice Equipment
Exclusive Ranges
Foster Refrigeration
Jestic Foodservice Equipment
Victor Manufacturing

Sustainable Supplier Award

DB Foods
Oleonix
Vegware

Energy Efficiency Award

Dawn Meats
Johnson's Stalbridge Linen Services
New Forest Ice Cream

Sustainable Sourcing Award

BaxterStorey
ISS Facilities Services Education
Nestlé Professional
The Bay Fish & Chips
Sodexo UK & Ireland

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ISS Facility Services Management
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Stakeholder Engagement Award

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Café Spice Namaste
The Spirit Pub Company

Social Impact and Diversity Award

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Will ministers get the drift?



Spring snowstorms make the perfect backdrop for the government's new chief scientist to get climate action back on the agenda

THIS ISN'T how it's supposed to be. Spring should herald warmer sunshine and lambs prancing about in green fields. Instead, they are struggling to survive in snowdrifts of 10 feet or more.

But talk to many climate scientists and they will say this is how it's likely to be. Extreme weather is here and it's here to stay.

"The weather we are experiencing now is caused by the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere 25 years ago," Professor Sir John Beddington told the BBC recently. "One of the analyses that is becoming more and more clear is we are looking at greater and greater variability" in weather.

"There are massive problems ahead and climate change is just going to make it worse"

Beddington made his comments in his last week of office as the government's chief scientist. He had held the post since 2008 and has "trodden a thin line with grace", according to the *Guardian*. Politics and science are often uneasy bedfellows, which is why Beddington had long advocated a



Outgoing: Professor Sir John Beddington

chief scientist be installed in each Whitehall department. Now there is a chief scientific adviser in every major science-using department – something Beddington can be proud of, and yet the government is no closer to making good on its "greenest ever" claims.

Beddington, to his credit, has spoken out on issues such as climate change and genetically modified foods. In his final interview as the government's top science advisor, he warned that there are "massive problems" ahead and climate change "is just going to make it worse". Beddington is well-known for his speech of 2009, in which he claimed that a "perfect storm" of food shortages, scarce water and insufficient energy were all "operating in the same time frame" and would come to a head in 2030.

In 2013, with snowstorms battering the country, Beddington's replacement is in the perfect position to keep battering politicians about the need for drastic action.

Sir Mark Walport – good luck.



sharing good ideas on food waste reduction + recycling

Bananas against waste

A Restaurant Associates recipe to avoid wasting blemished bananas
From: Brian Nicholas, Head Chef at KPMG London

Fairly Traded Banana Cake

125g butter
150g Fairtrade caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 free range egg
2 ripe Fairtrade bananas, mashed
190g self raising flour
60ml milk

Method

Melt butter, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over a medium heat
Remove from heat and add banana
Add the egg, mix well
Stir in flour and milk
Bake at 150C for 35 mins
Enjoy!

Top banana: stop bananas going brown by keeping them out of the fridge!

Easter sees landfill rise again

April 1st saw landfill tax rise again to £72 per tonne, meaning even bigger savings for businesses reducing waste and recycling. This annually-rising tax added to landfill gate fees has been a real driver of change – before it was introduced in 1996, UK recycling rates were just 7%, a fraction of the current 43% figure. From April 2014, this tax will stay at a minimum of £80 per tonne.

Calling all case studies

Is your business recycling its food waste? Do you have a practical tip to share about waste avoidance? We are seeking examples of best practice to share with WRAP – send them to us on stories@foodwastenet.org.uk

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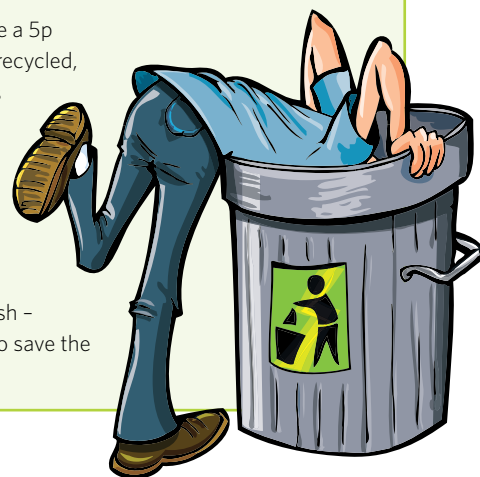
LANDFILL BANS have been a political hot potato for years but a new study published by Green Alliance might turn the chancellor's head. The environmental think-tank claims that banning food, textiles, wood and plastic from landfill could save resources worth £2.5bn a year. Companies would also avoid £1bn of landfill costs. Dustin Benton, a senior policy adviser at Green Alliance, says "the economics are clear" and proven. Bans on cars and mobile phones going to landfill have ensured the UK recovers three times more phones than the US – by 2020, four in every five mobiles will be recovered, keeping £13m of materials in the economy. If a similar restriction were in place for food, £693m of resources would be saved as well as £508m on landfill taxes. A plastics landfill ban would save £363m in taxes and over £1bn of resources.

THE COMPANY best known for making the Comic Relief red noses and inventing the plastic ruler has come up with another first. After years of research – and a few million quid – Invicta Plastics has created the world's first rigid and durable products made solely from regular plastic drinking bottles, lids and milk cartons. Coca-Cola will be among the first companies to test the new products, which include cups and plates.

THE 17,000 STUDENTS and 1,500 staff at Glasgow Caledonian University get through 2,000 paper cups, 1,500 plastic bottles and 500 aluminium cans every day. That's a lot of waste. So Encore Hospitality Services, which provides the university's catering services, has installed six "reverse vending" machines on campus.

Two sites, the refectory and Café Roots, each have a set of three machines – one to collect crushed cans, one to collect and crush PET soft drinks bottles and one to collect paper coffee cups. The machines recognise the composition of the products, which are flattened and sorted into a designated bin which also saves space.

Every user will receive a 5p voucher for each item recycled, redeemable in Encore's catering outlets on campus. Encore is confident that 80% of students will use the machines, but not just because they're strapped for cash – apparently they want to save the planet too.



The Political Print

THE COALITION'S apparent U-turn on plans to enforce a minimum price on alcohol was a textbook example of where the balance of power in government lies. The consultation was led by the Home Office and supported by the Department of Health – two departments with their own distinct priorities and perspectives.

While the health case for the policy is compelling – research has shown that a 45p minimum price per unit could save 2,000 lives within a decade – the argument expressed by the home secretary, Theresa May, that minimum pricing would punish the majority of people that consume alcohol responsibly, appears to have carried more clout.

On the subject of clout, although it has remained quiet on the issue, one can speculate that the Treasury was also concerned about the loss of tax revenue from a reduction in alcohol consumption. And in a battle between the DoH and the combined might of the Treasury and the Home Office, there's only one winner.

It should come as no surprise that in desperate economic times the Treasury's reach is everywhere. Its handprint is all over

the government's new agri-tech strategy, at the heart of which is the pursuit of economic growth through the export of agricultural products, technology and know-how.

There's no shame in the government pursuing economic growth through food and agriculture – far from it. The challenge of sustainability is to marry its various facets, including social, environmental and financial sustainability.

But when food and drink policy is viewed solely through the prism of economic growth the industry's footprint is likely to suffer.

In the current climate of austerity, those departments whose job it is to stand up for what is best for health and the environment must work harder than ever to make themselves heard.

Nick Hughes is a journalist and is currently studying food policy at City University.



An Innocent Smoothie with... **Steve Quinn**



The MD of Cucina Restaurants explains the 'high-risk' strategy that will soon see him be a caterer and a farmer.

David Burrows (DB): *Good afternoon Steve. It's been a turbulent few weeks for the food sector with horsegate. I've been reading your blog about it and you mention that all caterers have come under the same cloud. Has your business been affected?*

Steve Quinn (SQ): We weren't affected directly. When we were approached by Channel 4 News to discuss how the horsemeat situation might affect school caterers, we pointed to the vital importance of knowing about everything you are buying. When you buy in processed food products it can be difficult, if not impossible, to trace everything that's gone into those products. For us, the episode was also an opportunity to remind our clients of our ethical sourcing policy and our commitment to buying British and cooking all food from scratch on site.

DB: *Do you think the catering industry has come out of the controversy well or defended itself well enough?*

SQ: In situations like these it can be all too easy to get into simplistic finger-pointing. Now the dust has settled somewhat I think that we, as an industry, have an opportunity to look at how our supply chains work. When everything is driven by cost alone, some of the links in those chains are under huge pressure to compromise in order to make a margin. Now is the time to look closely at that scenario and see what can be done to change it. I think a lot of people in the catering industry are recognising that.

DB: *Some companies are putting in extra testing policies in the aftermath of horsegate but you might be going one step further, I hear, by buying your own farm?*

SQ: We've long wanted to become our own supplier. We're already baking our own bread, making our own sauces, growing as many of our own vegetables and herbs as we can. Buying our own farm would be a logical next step, giving us even greater control over the quality of the food we provide.

DB: *What type of farm are you looking at and why?*

SQ: We're open-minded about it right now, because we're very much at the exploratory stage. More than likely it will be

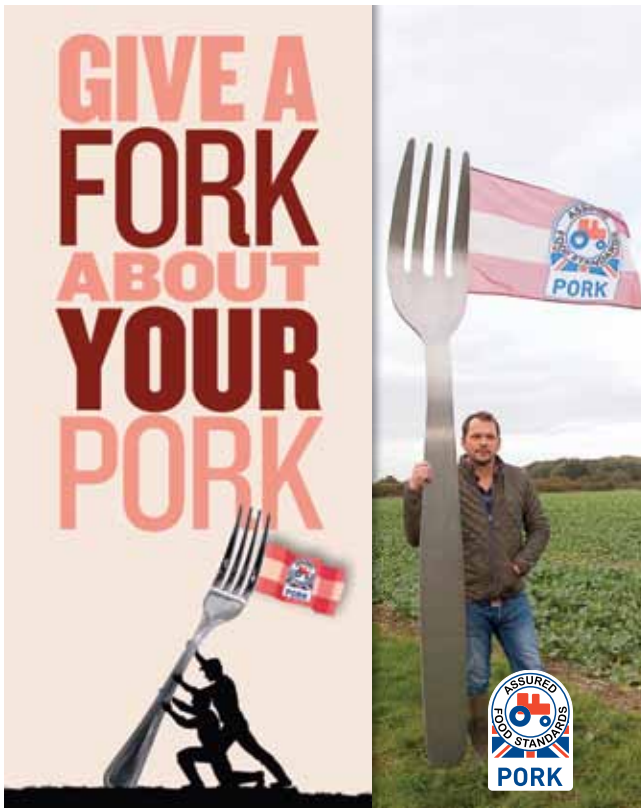
to produce our own eggs, poultry and pork products, but that could change. We have to determine how it would work for us from a business point of view. It's a very exciting move.

DB: *Do you not trust your current suppliers?*

SQ: As a brand we're known for the quality and range of the food cooked and served in our school restaurants. We wouldn't be able to do that if we didn't have excellent relationships with our suppliers. Buying the farm has nothing to do with this and neither is it primarily a commercial decision. This is very much about the Cucina brand. Sure there's a risk involved, but that's nothing new for us because our whole business model is built on a high-risk strategy.

DB: *So you'll be a caterer and a farmer...*

SQ: My founding vision for Cucina was to invest money in trained chefs and highest-quality ingredients, producing food of unsurpassed quality, with commercial success depending entirely on consumers buying the food in sufficient numbers. Seven years on, we're doing just fine. It now makes perfect sense for us to think about shortening our supply chain by being both farmer and caterer.



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My viewpoint

It was worth a try, but **Stuart Fusco** says it was hard to convince his customers to go easy on the salt.

“ Given that we got a mention in last month's *Footprint*, I thought it was only fair that we let you know how our little experiment to reduce the amount of salt our customers eat panned out.

The plan was to offer an alternative to salt and vinegar. With Salt Awareness Week on the horizon we wanted to get involved and do something a little bit different.

I'd been reading about how fish and chips are eaten in Italy where, instead of salt and vinegar, they use a tomato salsa and a squeeze of lemon.

Us Brits are a traditional bunch, but that doesn't mean we don't like change: remember the first impressions of having mayonnaise rather than ketchup with chips. However, from the start my head told me that our Italian twist would be a hard sell – but my heart was definitely in it.

Our fish and chips contain very little salt and it is only when salt is added after frying that the salt content of fish and chips increases. By offering our customers an alternative – and, I think, delicious – way to dress fish and chips, we hoped to show that fish and chips can be just as tasty without the added salt.

We offered some freebies with the Italian salsa and lemon and most liked it. The trouble was only one couple in an entire weekend of business preferred it. It was a real thumbs-up for salt and thumbs-down for salsa.

It was what I had expected. So, what have we learned other than that our customers want their salt (and vinegar)?

Well, they also don't like being told what to do. In our shop and restaurant, it's up to the customer what they want



to add. We've got salt-shakers with fewer holes, so that's helped cut their intake, but I think we crossed the line when we started advising them on what to have with their meals.

Our customers want to add as much or as little as they want, not what their local chip shop owner advises them. I can't disagree with that – it should be their choice. But that doesn't mean that reducing the nation's salt is impossible.

For a start, the government has a responsibility. I see that the health minister Anna Soubry wants to reduce the average daily salt intake from 8.1g to 6g. I think it's the government's responsibility to provide information to the public about why they need to cut their salt consumption and how. Let the people then make their own judgements.

There's a lot of processed food with high levels of salt, too, and if you don't look at the label then you don't know about it. The big companies are big culprits in our addiction to salt. At least we offer the choice of how much salt people want to add; in processed foods that is often out of their hands. I believe that any food company, from the largest manufacturer to the smallest chip shop, has a responsibility to help people eat more healthily, but as our little experiment showed, we have to be careful not to tell them what to do.

Stuart Fusco is director at the Quayside fish and chip shop and restaurant in Whitby.

Steering farmers through the storm



National Farmers Union leader Peter Kendall has seen members endure a miserable 10 months but concerns over food security, prices and sourcing in the wake of the horse meat scandal could offer new opportunities, he tells **David Burrows.**

TO TRAVEL 600 miles and have only 20 minutes with Peter Kendall irks me slightly. After all, I'm busy too. But given the challenges facing him as president of the National Farmers Union it's soon clear that I am lucky to have even that. As I sit in the union's London offices just down from Westminster the BBC is showing images of sheep being dug out of the snow in the Pennines. The extreme weather has battered the country's farmers, but the white spring is simply another chapter in a gruelling 10 months for everyone involved in food production.

"It's been bloody horrible," says Kendall of the weather, which has caused farmers huge emotional and financial stress. The number of dead sheep on farms is mounting after 20-foot snowdrifts in some areas, while cereal

growers – many of whom are still recovering after the wet weather last year which drowned crops – have had to delay planting. "We were about 3m tonnes down on our average wheat harvest," says Kendall, who is charged with turning all this into positive messaging and help the industry back on its feet.

"It's a tremendous challenge. We've done a confidence survey and in the medium to long term farmers are still confident. Right now though they feel pretty jaded – they've had the stuffing knocked out of them.

"It's been a gruelling year, but it helps us establish the notion that you can't take farming for granted. We're not taking 50 tonnes of steel, putting them in the front of a factory and [producing] nuts and bolts." Farming "is dependent on natural elements

and how the good Lord shines on us”.

Which is why some talk of climate change aggravates him. “I can cope with incremental temperature increases, but what I can’t cope with is four inches of rain in one night in August when I am trying to harvest, or snow in April during lambing. My challenge to government is to help us.”

Of course, he’s not asking the government to fix the weather – and he hopes his members aren’t asking him to do that either. Rather, “it’s about what do we do to make ourselves more resilient”.

Kendall emphasises the idea of “resilience” a number of times, keen perhaps not to portray farming as an industry that goes cap in hand to the government for more handouts and higher subsidies. Sometimes, however, it is unavoidable. This month the NFU wrote to the government’s farming secretary, Owen Paterson, to appeal for free collection and professional disposal of the dead animals piling up on farms as the snow thawed. “We don’t want government to shower us with money and bail us out. We want to put the right conditions in place that help us build successful businesses.”

Kendall farms in Eyeworth, east Bedfordshire, in partnership with his brother. Together they grow 620 hectares of crops, having moved away from livestock to a purely arable system. He also has a degree in agricultural economics from Nottingham University. Perhaps he draws on this academic and practical experience when suggesting that farmers are not treated as businesses, and that the importance of farming has for too long been underestimated.

He points out that exports have grown in each of the past seven years (though they may show a fall in 2012 thanks, again, to the weather) while “thousands of jobs” have been created in the sector. “This is a really important industry and ought to be right at the heart of government thinking,” he says.

This is one of Kendall’s top priorities – and has remained so since he was voted president in 2006. This is his fourth term in office, having previously held positions as NFU cereals chairman and deputy president.

He is obviously doing something right for the union’s 55,000 members but there is a feeling that he is in charge at a pivotal moment for British farming. Food security. Food traceability. Food prices. All three have come to a head this year with the weather and the horse meat scandal.

There have been chinks of light. Food security, for instance, is something that ministers are now publicly speaking about, though Kendall has changed his focus slightly. In this year’s address to the NFU conference, he “stopped banging on about the global 9.5bn people by 2050” and highlighted the domestic issues. National Audit Office figures “show that we’ll have another 4.5m people in the UK within eight years, so standing still on production means we’ll go backwards in terms of food security,” he says. “We need to sit down and think about how we build capacity.”

This ties with Kendall’s overriding yet “simple” ambition to “put more British food on more British plates”. Better relationships with retailers would be a start. It’s a challenge that has been a top priority for many NFU presidents for many years. Kendall takes time

“To me it is the absolute height of hypocrisy for government to say that it is going to regulate and raise the bar for our domestic farmers because it thinks it is important, but when it comes to [the government] buying food it’s not important. That sort of hypocrisy really does my members’ heads in.”

to praise Sainsbury’s for “being aspirational” and “raising the bar” but says he will hold to account those that continue to make a virtue of price. Morrisons is one that he’s had on his radar recently – somewhat of a surprise given its impressive record on British sourcing. The supermarket has introduced a tertiary poultry brand, Hemsley, which has British-style branding even though some of the meat is imported. This sends the wrong messages, he says.

If the supermarkets “make rules and say [they] want lower densities and they want more windows for poultry, then go and say they’re developing another range like Hemsley and buy in from other parts of the world, then that isn’t fair to those farmers who have spent half a million quid putting new windows in.”

This problem also extends to public

procurement. The NFU has often focused on relationships with retailers given their power and budgets, but Kendall is keen to spotlight the government’s sourcing processes too, saying its attitude to food procurement is “lax”. The economic crisis is part of the problem, he admits, but there are “good examples” of public-sector procurement initiatives that don’t end up costing more.

“To me it is the absolute height of hypocrisy for government to say that it is going to regulate and raise the bar for our domestic farmers because it thinks it is important, but when it comes to [the government] buying food it’s not important. That sort of hypocrisy really does my members’ heads in. We do a fair amount of lobbying around this, but it falls on deaf ears and we need more help.”

Kendall has written to all government departments asking for information on their food sourcing, and “some” have responded. The horse meat scandal could stimulate progress, however, with Kendall once again looking to find a silver lining to a crisis.

The scandal has acted as a “wake-up call” and shows that food prices cannot be pushed lower and lower without consequences. “We

have got retailers saying things they have never said before,” says Kendall, including the traditional farming bully-boy Tesco. Some of those who attended

the NFU’s annual conference in February arrived at the Footprint Forum later in the month buoyed by comments, claims and commitments made by the Tesco chief, Philip Clarke. Kendall was also impressed, but warns that bragging must give way to action by retailers, foodservice companies and the government alike.

“If we have got the biggest retailer wanting to change how it works, that creates a massive opportunity. It means the ones who want to be better have to go further and the whole thing becomes competitive bragging. If we can have competitive bragging about who has the best relationship with British farming I’ll be a very happy chap. I don’t [just] want to see bragging – I want to see delivery and I want to see results.”

That will, no doubt, continue to keep him busy.

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UK looks to New York to blaze trail on public health

The US city's plan to ban supersize sugary drinks may have stalled for now but experts say it's the kind of bold political move Britain needs.

THE INTRODUCTION of a ban on large sugary drinks in New York stalled last month when a judge declared it "arbitrary and capricious". Meanwhile, the UK faced a similar public health U-turn when the government seemingly dropped its high-profile and highly controversial plan to introduce minimum pricing on alcohol. There was, albeit less surprisingly, no sign of a sugary drinks tax in March's budget. The health agenda has taken a battering during Lent, but does it mean that campaigners, the UK government and, in the US, Michael Bloomberg, have given up on regulation?

Bloomberg, New York's mayor, had hoped to see the ban in place by now. Under his plans sales of fizzy drinks and other sugary beverages larger than 16oz (0.5l) would be banned, except in supermarkets and convenience stores. Those that violate the law, including restaurants, face a \$200 (£130) fine.

But in a 36-page ruling the judge, Milton Tingling, questioned whether such a ban could be enforced and listed inconsistencies in the plan.

The American Beverage Association, which has been campaigning against the ban, said the ruling provided a "sigh of relief" to New Yorkers. "With this ruling behind us, we look forward to collaborating with city leaders on solutions that will have a meaningful and lasting impact on the people of New York City."

But food policy experts, watching developments from the UK, suggest that the New York ban is exactly the kind of long-term

vision needed to tackle food and drink-related health problems here and in the US.

"Given the overwhelming evidence of the adverse health, social justice and environmental impacts of our current patterns of food and drink consumption, we desperately need an approach based on a long-term vision for the food system, not on short-term political expediency," says Sean Roberts, the policy director at the UK-based Food Ethics Council.

Roberts says the last-minute U-turn in New York "confirms what a political hot potato the healthy eating agenda is". He also drew comparisons between the fizzy drinks ban and the possibility of a "politically driven reverse" on minimum alcohol pricing by the coalition government.

"Being the first to do something is never easy."

– Mayor Bloomberg

The government's consultation on its alcohol strategy closed in February and it is considering the responses. This may take some time. Though the prime minister backs the idea, not all in his cabinet agree (see page 8). The health case is strong but the home secretary, Theresa May, appears to have won the day with the counter-argument that it would punish responsible drinkers. The Treasury will also have given her silent yet powerful backup.

There is no doubt that introducing a minimum alcohol price would be a bold move. It would also be an example of the

long-term vision Roberts suggests is needed.

Another might well be a tax on sugary drinks. The idea, supported by more than 60 organisations, including the National Heart Forum and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, would involve a tax of 20p a litre on sugary drinks. The academy published the results of a six-month inquiry into obesity and recommended the tax as part of a far-reaching action plan. Those representing food and drink companies claim the report added very little to the debate and was simply a chance to "demonise" certain foods and outlets.

Mayor Bloomberg's plans have faced similar criticisms in the US, but he has been there, done it and got the regulation to show for it.

He has overseen a number of groundbreaking and controversial public health policies – from banning smoking in workplaces, to requiring chain restaurants to post calorie counts and banning trans fats. On hearing the recent verdict, he said that "being the first to do something is never easy". The Home Office minister Jeremy Browne said recently: "There were – and are, in my view – powerful arguments on both sides of the debate" on alcohol pricing. To tackle the downward trajectory of the nation's health, ministers have some difficult decisions ahead.





Stretching the limits of sustainability

Food businesses must be careful not to see target-setting as a competition, says **David Burrows**.

ONE OF THE most difficult tasks facing sustainability managers is how to set targets. "The first time you set them you're never quite sure," admits Inder Poonaji, the head of environmental sustainability at Nestlé UK & Ireland. "When we set ours [in 2009/10], we thought they were pretty ambitious, but we actually achieved some of our goals pretty quickly so we've realigned them."

A target to cut water consumption by 30% by 2020, based on 2006 levels, has already been met. So now it's 40% by 2015 and 50% by 2020 – both of which will be "an incredible stretch", says Poonaji. "But the good news is that we're on the journey."

A sustainability target is not the end but very much the beginning. But what makes a decent target and where does the balance between "ambitious" and "achievable" lie?

Twelve months ago, Accor announced a sustainability plan that it said would change the face of the hospitality sector. Planet 21 identifies 21 areas of the hotel group's activity where improvements will be made, each with a specific policy for action and a measurable goal for 2015. The global undertaking will

span its hotel brands, which include Ibis and Novotel, and involve all of the group's 145,000 employees and many millions of its guests.

The first year's results are expected any time now, but the monitoring has been ongoing, as Sophie Flak, the company's executive VP for sustainable development explains. "Even though we only publish results once a year, we adapt the frequency to suit the objectives. For instance, energy and water consumption levels in our hotels are monitored monthly. This allows immediate analysis and appropriate response if trends are not in the right direction."

So what happens if any of the targets are not met?

"Whenever we see a case where the country action plan is not going the way it should, then we discuss it with our local Planet 21 co-ordinator to analyse the causes and set up a corrective action plan. We also make sure we involve the local teams and the right level of management in the country."

This will ensure targets are met. As an

added sweetener, team bonuses will be in part linked to the plan. "Teams will not get their full bonus if these targets are not hit," Flak explained at the launch event.

"We've also introduced a new algorithm that accounts for changes in the weather so no one can blame missing an energy target on the weather."

The Scottish government blamed cold weather in 2010 for Scotland's failure to meet its recently published emissions reduction targets for that year. There are signs that the Westminster government is already sceptical about its targets under the Climate Change Act: the environment minister, Owen Paterson, reportedly said that the act may have legally binding targets – to cut emissions by 80% by 2050 – but whether it's possible to meet them is a different question.

Paterson may well believe that the bar has been set too high. Environmentalists would argue to the contrary. So where's the balance? When it comes to corporate sustainability goals, Nestlé's Poonaji says: "Over-ambitious targets can demotivate, but make them too easy and staff won't take them seriously".

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Richard Felgate, the head of energy, environment and sustainability at the pub and restaurant company Mitchells & Butlers, admits that some of the targets he sees set by others are “that easy to achieve that there’s not a lot of point to them”. He prefers a more flexible approach.

“You have got to keep an open mind and not constrain yourself by being too specific,” he adds. “Sometimes, when you set targets you can be constrained and lose sight of everything else.”

There’s also the fact that innovation is always around the corner. Ramon Arratia is European sustainability director at the carpetmaker Interface, which led the way in sustainability targets. Its “Mission Zero”, set in 2006, is to eliminate any negative effect the company may have on the environment by 2020. Mission impossible? Possibly, but that doesn’t faze Arratia and his team.

“Companies often look at what’s possible when they set targets, so if a 20% reduction in carbon is possible, they’ll set the target at 15%,” he says. “But those targets are set based on what the technical guys know today, which means you are also ruling out innovation. Our target means we have to explore some pretty radical stuff. After all, what’s the point of a target if you know you’ll hit it?”

PepsiCo is another that admits it is pushing the bounds of possibility. In an interview with the 2degrees network last year, its sustainability director, Martyn Seal, highlighted the manufacturer’s target to be “fossil-fuel-free by 2023”. He said: “We know how to get halfway there, but we’re not sure about the other half yet. That will take new innovation and new business partnerships, but it’ll be worth it. If we can make that target then we’ll be in a strong position. It would be a strategic advantage for us.”

There are other external factors that can help companies hit their sustainability targets – not least the right policy drivers. Accor’s Flak says that France’s new regulations on sustainability data transparency make it mandatory from this year (based on 2012 data) to externally audit more social and environmental indicators – just like financial data. Carbon footprints will also have to be published for all French subsidiaries with over 500 employees. October should see a similar scheme launched in the UK, albeit just for the largest companies at first (see page 22). “Regulation on sustainable development topics needs to be designed to really foster progress, and not only give another source of taxes to governments in this hard economic context,” says Flak.

Some have had to adjust their targets after changes to government policy. Richard Gillies, the director of Marks & Spencer’s sustainability programme, Plan A, admits in the company’s “How We Do Business Report 2011” that the retailer has “had to evolve our plans to become carbon-neutral in response to changes in government policy on renewable energy, during this administration and the previous one”. But now it’s “on plan” to meet the target to become carbon-neutral.

Plan A is often held up as not just any sustainability plan, with 180 different targets across the business. To date, 138 have been met, with 30 on track and 12 either not met or behind plan. M&S’s most recent update doesn’t shy away from that dirty dozen, either. “If you’re meeting all your targets all of the time, then you’re not stretching yourself,” says Mike Barry, who heads up the Plan A project.

When it comes to sustainability targets, the bar is constantly being raised, but that doesn’t mean it’s a competition,



M&S’s Plan A has 180 sustainability targets, over two-thirds of which have already been achieved.

says Poonaji. “Target-setting should be an analysis of your organisation and the commitments put in place by external stakeholders in your sector. We all have different challenges so you need to set smart targets.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT

An analyst once admitted to me that he had an addiction to sustainability targets. “Some people have got target fatigue, but not me – I’m a bit of a target junkie,” he said. “They can empower and drive innovation.” I’d agree, but to do so they have to be ambitious, yet achievable; far-reaching, yet flexible. They also have to be relevant and rewarding. If you can achieve that mix, then there’s a chance your targets will drive change, both internally and up and down your supply chains.



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More plastics please, we're British

The UK needs to recycle more than plastic bottles when it comes to packaging waste. There are signs that improvements are on the way.

WHEN IT COMES to recycling, plastic hasn't always been fantastic. There are different polymers, or types of plastics, which have different properties and processing characteristics. So recycling plants tend to sort them by polymer to maximise the value and range of potential uses. That's why a tonne of mixed plastics will fetch much less than a tonne of, say, purely plastic bottles. It also explains why the UK recycles over half its plastic bottles but just 12-15% of mixed plastics.

Collection of bottles has been one of the waste industry's big success stories. In 2000 just 3% of plastic bottles were recycled with the other 411,000 tonnes sent to landfill; today the rate is 52%, according to Closed Loop Recycling. Now the challenge is to improve the collection of other plastics.

"The materials are there; we just need to get even better at collecting them," says Closed Loop's CEO, Chris Dow. Design also has to improve, he adds. "This is a huge part of what we do, working with large brands and retailers to educate them about what can be recycled and what can't, how particular glues and labels are a hindrance to effective



recycling and so on. As a nation we're getting better, but we're still not there yet."

The need to get there has intensified recently: the Chinese have made moves to restrict imports of plastic packaging waste from Europe given poor quality and a rise in domestic materials. Malaysia has banned the import of solid plastic waste from the EU. The environment secretary, Owen Paterson, said this was an "opportunity" for the UK waste sector. Dow agrees: "I think that certain sectors of the waste industry have felt comfortable with the ability to export contaminated plastics to the corners of the world."

There has also been a tendency to send plastics to landfill. After all, Europe has a waste system driven by weight-based targets, which has long made plastic a low-priority material for councils collecting consumer waste. But it wasn't just the fact that they were light, as Adam Read, a waste expert at the environmental consultancy Ricardo-AEA, explains. "With limited plastic recycling facilities in the UK, plastic bottles were the primary target, but yoghurt pots, films and tubs and so on were not wanted by many of the facilities. It became a confusing message to residents about what plastics could and couldn't be recycled."

Stergios Bititsios, the associate director of packaging and design at MMR Research Worldwide, says the vast majority of packaging fails to clearly indicate which types of plastic are highly recyclable and which are not. Mixed packaging only adds to this confusion. "Consumers find having to go through the process of separating the two materials extremely mundane, time-consuming and meaningless to a degree. It's simply far easier to bin the packaging than it is to collect it."

However, solutions are emerging to keep plastic away from landfill, says Dow. "We've identified the closed-loop solution for packaging and recent launches will also transform the foodservice market. This includes closed-loop solutions for the type of packaging used in foodservice, how it is collected and recycled. It is an exciting area of growth that can benefit all partners."

Watch this space.

Nick Cliffe from Closed Loop Recycling highlights some of the solutions for foodservice packaging online at foodservicefootprint.com/category/features-2/comment

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The energy calculator that could save firms millions

A new software tool lets catering companies put a figure on the benefits of splashing out for more efficient equipment



THERE IS LITTLE doubt that foodservice is an energy-hungry business. Contract caterers alone spend about £292m on energy – about 18p per meal. However, that could be cut to just over £200m, or 12.3p per meal, through a combination of behavioural and technological changes. A study by Ricardo-AEA and the Carbon Trust concluded that if 80% of sites replaced electric combis with gas ones it would save £14m a year across the sector. Replacing electric ovens with more efficient models would save a further £8.3m.

But there's a catch. Energy efficiency tends to cost more. Even though energy bills are rising and investments repay themselves quicker, procurement departments often still see the lowest capital expenditure as the best possible option. Going green remains a hard sell, especially when it comes to replacing kitchen equipment: 70% of those surveyed by the Catering Equipment Suppliers Association (CESA) said product substitution was a "major problem". In a follow-up question, 44% said a system that provided clear and comparable lifetime costs would solve the issue.

So that is what CESA have done.

Working with the Carbon Trust, and supported by DEFRA (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) it has developed an energy calculator for catering equipment, which will be launched next month. For the sceptics, this is much, much more than an energy label or a carbon label.

In its current format, site managers

can input data from the site, such as the equipment, the menus and hours of operation, into a sophisticated spreadsheet which provides data on energy use.

The clever part comes in changing the parameters, such as the type of oven or warewasher, which is then reflected in the energy data, explains Dominic Burbridge, who leads the Carbon Trust's work with the hospitality and foodservice sectors. Enhanced versions of the technology will even be able to pitch different cooking techniques against one another. "It'll allow operators to start tweaking what they buy and what they do," says Burbridge. "From storing food, to cooking it, serving it and cleaning up, you'll be able to see your plated costs and energy consumption figures per meal."

"From storing food, to cooking it, serving it and cleaning up, you'll be able to see your plated costs and energy consumption figures per meal."

The tool will provide business benefits to operators, designers and manufacturers, Burbridge adds. "For operators, it'll help them optimise their kitchens and affect behaviour change. For designers it'll provide third party, independent validation of equipment [energy consumption] figures. And for manufacturers it'll help drive innovation in line with the Ecodesign Directive."

CESA, which is also working with CEDA (the Catering Equipment Distributors Association) and FCSI (Foodservice

Consultants Society International) on the project, hopes the software will have a "huge impact" on the way operators, designers and specifiers plan and manage commercial kitchens in the UK. "It will help the industry cut carbon emissions and running costs," says the association's chair, Nick Oryino.

The foodservice market produces 1.32m tonnes of carbon dioxide through its energy use. By training staff in best-practice procedures for cooking and dishwashing equipment, the industry's costs could be reduced by £35m and carbon emissions cut by 173,000 tonnes a year. Replacing refrigerators with ETL (Energy Technology List) standard models will save £13m and 56,600 tonnes annually. According to the Ricardo-AEA/Carbon Trust study (see January's *Footprint*), total potential savings for the industry amount to £114m and 566,000 tonnes a year.

CESA and the Carbon Trust hope to offer the licensed calculator software to a "select bunch" of users who can "use it and play with it" from May. A full launch will follow in the autumn. Burbridge is confident the tool makes environmental and economic sense to businesses up and down the catering equipment supply chain. "I think there are large operators and food businesses that might want to sponsor the tool," he says – a little like Unilever Food Solutions has managed with its waste auditing toolkit.

Oryino is equally confident of success. "The size of the prize is exceptional," he says. "It will make us a more efficient and more environment-friendly industry."

Buying responsibly: Green10 simplifies a complex change



Green10 is the new responsible sourcing initiative developed by procurement specialist Acquire Services to help foodservice businesses develop and monitor their responsible sourcing goals.

Many foodservice providers have struggled with the responsible buying/green agenda for a while now, but clients and customers are getting tired of hollow words and unsubstantiated promises: they want to see a strategy, they want action and they want to see results. Operators are in a strong position to distinguish themselves from their competition by proving their buying activity is responsible and that they take green issues seriously.

Says Acquire's Commercial Director Ed Bevan, "Sourcing goods and services responsibly has become increasingly important to the organisations we work for, their clients and most importantly their customers.

"But no two food service organisations are the same," continues Ed. "Their buying profiles, their food offers and, above all, their customers will be diverse. So, we have developed a flexible framework that will give any operator the opportunity to re-shape their buying activity - whatever their interpretation

of the green agenda might be."

Green10 involves every aspect of the supply chain and product selection. In consultation with its clients and operational staff, Acquire identified and defined '10 Pillars of Responsibility'. The pillars may be singled out or used in any combination to reflect an individual food service organisation's buying strategy and help measure progress in meeting any targets set to bring about improvement.

The pillars cover every aspect of what is an extremely complex challenge - sourcing, buying, using and disposing of food responsibly, with an appropriate level of concern for the environment as well as the end user's satisfaction and enjoyment. The 10 pillars comprise Food Mileage, Local Sourcing, Environmental Profile, Seasonality, Renewable, Culture, Animal Welfare, Wellbeing, Packaging and Food Waste.

Each pillar has been clearly defined to reflect Acquire's understanding of the issues involved. As Roy Farrier, Executive Director at Acquire says, "We realise that multiple interpretations of the pillars will exist within the foodservice sector; Green10 is governed entirely by the definitions we have developed. It's by picking and choosing which pillars to concentrate on that individual businesses can shape their own policies according to their priorities and their definition of what being 'green' means to them.

"Alongside each pillar we have defined the metric by which operational/financial performance may be measured," explains Roy. "By establishing a start/base position, organisations embracing this initiative are

able to accurately measure their progress against the goals they have agreed within their business.

"It's likely that every organisation will focus solely upon the pillars that reflect their policies, strategies and CSR goals and so it follows that the shape of each client's responsible sourcing initiative will be unique. Green10 may represent a starting point, a halfway house or perhaps even an end game for some food service organisations."

Acquire recommends epsys - the leading online procurement platform - as its preferred e-trading partner and many of the Green10 metrics are captured in real time through each client's unique e-trading history across their entire estate.

For any organisations that do adopt Green10 Acquire has produced a series of posters to promote the initiative to employees in order to encourage involvement and buy-in at every level.

Concludes Ed, "We understand that foodservice providers will focus upon their own combination of pillars. It's our job is to help those providers shape their approach to responsible sourcing and provide the means by which progress can be accurately measured."

Green10 is a framework that can help any food service organisation shape their responsible buying strategy and operators interested in learning more about how Green10 could help them make a difference should visit

www.greenten.co.uk





Mandatory carbon reporting

IT'S BEEN a long time coming, but the 1,100 UK businesses listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange will soon have to divulge economic and environmental information in their annual reports. Mandatory carbon reporting will contribute to saving 4m tonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2021. "Counting your business costs while hiding your greenhouse gas emissions is a false economy," said the deputy prime minister, Nick Clegg, on announcing the new scheme last year.

However, it doesn't stop at greenhouse gases. Companies will also have to disclose how "material" environmental and social issues will affect their businesses. This is a long way from corporate social responsibility box-ticking, as PricewaterhouseCoopers partner, Alan McGill, explained recently.

"In the annual report and accounts you have two halves: the financial reporting, known as the back half, and the narrative reporting, or front half. There's talk about restructuring that front half to require a strategic report that's much more forward-looking reporting that has the strategy of the organisation and the key material risks and how it is dealing with those risks. Within that you have specific requirements to report on environmental and social issues. The government is outlining what will be included in that strategic report."

The environment department, DEFRA, will produce guidance "in the next few months". As with any new regulation, there's a chance that there will be delays, but October 1st is the date everyone is working towards.

If everything goes to plan, the new regulation will ensure the government makes good on one of its pre-election green pledges. How long will it be before the next?

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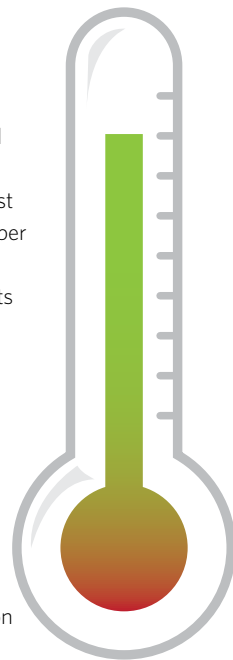
From the web

GREENER

- Flying fare – Virgin is set to put its food sourcing policies to the test
- Sustainable packaging – it's now against the law to place illegally harvested timber and timber products on the EU market
- Divine – it doesn't use any palm oil in its chocolate

GROSSER

- Polls – in particular, ones asking horse-scar(r)ed Britons if they want British meat
- Neonicotinoids – new government research provides little clarity on whether the pesticides harm bees
- Thorntons – failed to divulge any info on the use of palm oil in its Easter eggs



Green 10 helps foodservice businesses monitor their unique responsible sourcing goals and provide a means by which their commitment to improvement may be measured.

2/10 Local sourcing

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