It’s twelve months since FDF and Government launched a shared vision to grow food and drink manufacturing by 20% by 2020. It’s been a busy year. Through our careers campaign Taste Success we are bringing alive the range of opportunities our sector offers and inspiring the next generation of food engineers and scientists to join our ranks. On exports, we’re taking on the world, with Ministers leading from the front championing British food and drink, whilst working behind the scenes to remove the barriers to export. And we’re working together to make sure our sector stays world class in product and process innovation - essential to continue to satisfy our consumers at home and abroad; whilst playing our part in increasing global food security and delivering sustainable growth.

As our largest manufacturing sector, the food and drink industry has a key role to play in helping Defra realise its twin ambitions of growing the economy and improving the environment. That’s why we are committed to working with FDF to realise its vision of growth for the sector by 2020. Increasing skills and getting new people into the industry is vital, not just to this ambition but for the future of the sector as a whole. The doubling of the number of new apprenticeships in food and drink over the past year is a huge achievement and one of which the industry should be proud. Like FDF, we want to encourage sustainable growth through the use of world class science and new technologies while taking advantage of the growing global demand for high-quality UK products. FDP’s continued contribution to the Exports Action Plan is essential to exploiting these opportunities. I look forward to working with FDF on this shared agenda.

When the Food Manufacturers’ Federation was formed in 1913, its members could not have conceived of the changes that would take place in the food and drink industry over the following century. But they would have recognised some of the key advantages that the UK industry enjoys today. The quality and value of our products, our branding, our innovation, and the demand for our products both at home and abroad were as much a part of a successful food manufacturing sector 100 years ago as they are today.

And whilst our understanding of many of the scientific issues impacting on our industry has also transformed in the last one hundred years, I hope our predecessors would also recognise FDF’s four key pillars of activity – food safety and science; health and wellbeing; sustainability and competitiveness - as being the right agenda for the twenty-first century industry.

Through 2013 we will celebrate everything the industry and the Federation has achieved in the last century. Taking our inspiration from the past we’ll also be looking to the future with a continued focus on how we can create the right environment for our members’ businesses to thrive, working together with government to overcome the challenges to growth and keeping the UK at the forefront of product and process innovation.

To do this, the industry will also need to attract the best talent. Through our careers campaign Taste Success we will continue to bring to life the range of opportunities our sector offers - in areas as diverse as engineering, marketing and communications, sales, HR or logistics. And I believe our partnership with Sheffield Hallam University to create the first food and drink engineering degree exemplifies the practical approach of our industry to finding solutions to important issues such as skills gaps.

FDF’s Centenary means that we can reflect on our past achievements, while relishing future opportunities. I hope that you will join us as we celebrate 100 years of FDF and the Great British success story of food and drink manufacturing.
**RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT**

**LAUNCHING OUR VISION FOR INNOVATION**

FDF and the National Technology Platform for Food launched their vision for innovation in food and drink manufacturing at a packed meeting of the industry’s All Party Parliamentary Group in October. The vision calls for the development of an agri-food strategy, improved understanding of the sector by research councils and government departments, new funding models for collaborative research and a revision and simplification of the R&D tax credits system. Speaking at the launch Science Minister David Willetts (left) recognised the importance of the industry and committed to work with Defra to reflect its needs in the forthcoming agri-tech strategy.

**EXPORTS**

**SEVENTH YEAR OF CONSECUTIVE GROWTH**

The 2012 Olympics provided the perfect platform to showcase food and drink. Following the launch of the Export Action Plan at the turn of the year, FDF worked closely with UKTI on the Food, Drink and Retail Business Summit and with Defra to deliver an international press briefing led by the Secretary of State. The industry was also able to celebrate a seventh consecutive year of export growth when Minister for Trade and Investment, Lord Green addressed FDF’s annual dinner. Looking to next year FDF will work with UKTI to encourage more businesses to export, working directly with UKTI’s overseas commercial offices to identify new opportunities.

**GROCERIES CODE ADJUDICATOR**

**INDUSTRY POISED TO WORK WITH NEW ADJUDICATOR**

The long-awaited GCA Bill has made good progress through Westminster thanks to cross-party support for the legislation and the already established Groceries Code. Having met with new BIS Minister Jo Swinson, FDF is now also working with officials to establish how industry might interact with the Adjudicator and how it might assist in the development of guidance for suppliers.

**GRADUATE EXCELLENCE**

**INDUSTRY SET TO LAUNCH FIRST FOOD AND DRINK ENGINEERING DEGREE**

The first dedicated food and drink engineering degree will revolutionise our industry and create the steady pipeline of employment-ready engineers that we need to help us meet the challenges outlined in our 2020 Vision. This year, working in partnership with the National Skills Academy, we invited universities from across the UK to compete for the role as our partner in the project and the UK’s first centre of excellence for food and drink engineering. After a competitive pitching process, Sheffield Hallam University was selected to host the new degree. Our high-level project team, comprised of representatives from partner organisations and from the food industry, is steering us through the project’s key milestones. We are progressing fast to both develop and market the new degree to prospective entrants in time for its first intake in autumn 2014.

**RESPONSIBLE GROWTH**

**CONTINUED ACHIEVEMENTS IN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

In launching the 2020 Vision, FDF has been clear that the pursuit of increased growth must be sustainable, underpinned by a continued ambition to reduce the industry’s impacts on the environment and to play its full part in public health. To show leadership on sustainability, manufacturers are also looking to reduce their impacts beyond the factory gate and as the FDF’s Environmental Ambition celebrates its fifth birthday, the Sustainability Steering Group has just produced ‘Five Steps Towards a More Sustainable Supply Chain’.

Many FDF members have supported the Responsibility Deal on Public Health and delivered further reductions in salt and calories while also developing ambitious Health at Work programmes. FDF will showcase examples of members’ activities to improve public health in a report titled ‘Delivering Healthy Growth’.

**TASTE SUCCESS**

**ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS**

Our industry-led careers campaign to attract new talent to UK food and drink manufacturing is a key part of our 2020 Vision. Through engaging directly with young people, teachers, parents and careers advisers, we are working to raise the profile of our sector and to make it a career destination of choice.

In March we launched our digital campaign which includes engagement via FaceBook, YouTube and Twitter. Within six months Chilli Baby, one of our three fun Taste Success promotional videos had already broken the 30,000 views barrier and been requested for use by schools and colleges trying to promote careers in food manufacturing. In 2012 we also took our campaign direct to over 80,000 people by exhibiting at such high profile events as the UK’s leading engineering and science event for young people - the Big Bang Fair in March, and at Skills London in November.

**APPRENTICESHIPS**

**MORE THAN DOUBLING NUMBERS IN 2012**

Apprenticeships are one of the key ways that we recognise that we can attract talent for the future to our sector as part of our Vision. Less than a year after committing to double the number of apprenticeships offered in our sector through our Apprenticeship Pledge, we have exceeded our target, more than doubling numbers to over 4,700. Fundamental to this success was promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to businesses, both big and small, across the UK. In 2012, working alongside industry partners the National Apprenticeship Service and Improve - the National Skills Academy for food and drink, we took our Apprenticeship Roadshow to Birmingham, Edinburgh, London and Preston.