

June 2008

# TheVoice

FDF: Speaking for the food and drink manufacturing industry

## New group to focus on issues affecting food manufacturing

A new All Party Parliamentary Food and Drink Manufacturing Industry Group has been formed. The group will focus on the issues affecting the country's largest manufacturing sector, as well as highlighting its importance to the economy and the UK food chain.

More than 40 Parliamentarians have currently agreed to join the group, which will have its inaugural meeting on 4 June.

FDF estimates that on average 3,000 jobs in each consistency are dependent on the food and drink manufacturing industry, so we hope that more Parliamentarians will be interested in signing up to the group in the coming weeks.

One of the sector's biggest current issues is raw material prices, which has also raced to the top of the political agenda. The group is planning to hold a session in July to explore this issue in depth and gain a fuller understanding of how recent events will impact consumers.

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## EDM highlights GDA labelling success

Alastair Carmichael has tabled an EDM highlighting new research from The Mirror newspaper that indicates consumers are finding Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) nutrition labels useful in making healthier food choices.

EDM 1518 aims to celebrate the success of front-of-pack food labelling and we encourage all MPs who support the efforts that the industry has made to promote product labelling to sign the EDM.

The research carried out by the newspaper shows 91% of those readers polled were aware of the labels, 62% had used them, 84% found them easy to understand and that 82% thought they contained all the information they wanted.

## Environment tops the agenda at FDF summer reception

Food and drink manufacturers' efforts to reduce their impact on the environment will be a key topic for conversation at this year's FDF Parliamentary reception.

The reception is kindly being sponsored by Paddy Tipping and is a key opportunity for Parliamentarians, and other stakeholders, to network with representatives from food and drink companies of all sizes.

At the event, FDF will be unveiling a new initiative to encourage fewer and friendlier food transport miles, developed as part of our groundbreaking Five-fold Environmental Ambition. During the event, we will also show how FDF members are using the Ambition to make a real difference to their impact on the environment.

The reception will be held on 15 July from 4pm to 6pm in the Members' Dining Room in the House of Commons. Please put this date in your diary.

[www.fdf.org.uk](http://www.fdf.org.uk)

Food and Drink  
Federation



If you want information about anything in this newsletter, please call Luke Gibbs 020 7420 7125

## Food policy must be balanced to be truly sustainable

Policy makers must find the right balance between the economic, environmental and social aspects of issues such as sustainable development, delegates at a recent Scottish Food and Drink Federation symposium were told.

That is all the more important given that the Scottish Government is focusing on developing a National Food Policy.

Scottish Government Enterprise Minister Jim Mather, who was a keynote speaker at the symposium, said: "It's clear there is far more to food than what we put on our plate – not just food production and consumption, but health, education and tourism.

"We will set out our next steps in June to develop Scotland's first-ever food policy that helps support a sustainable food industry."

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## How FDF works for its members

The Food and Drink Federation speaks on behalf of one of the most important manufacturing sectors in the country, directly employing almost 470,000 people.

In promoting and protecting the interests of our members, FDF is focusing on the issues that matter most to their businesses and to the consumers our industry serves:

- Food Safety and Science
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainability and Competitiveness

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*Our front cover picture was taken at the Enfield factory of family-owned bakers Warburtons, a member of FDF since 2002.*

## Industry hears Tory vision for boosting the nation's health

Shadow Secretary of State for Health Andrew Lansley was guest of honour at this year's FDF President's Dinner, held at the Waldorf Hotel in London and attended by more than 250 chief executives, Parliamentarians, policy makers, journalists and NGO representatives.

In a wide-ranging speech, Lansley talked about the positive role being played by the food and drink sector in tackling major public health issues such as obesity, and he touched on the potential for a 'responsibility deal' to be forged between industry and Government in this area. Lansley stressed that the focus for Government should be on education, positive messaging and helping citizens take more personal responsibility for their diet, exercise and weight.



*Shadow Secretary of State for Health Andrew Lansley gave the keynote address at this year's FDF President's Dinner*

Responding, FDF President Iain Ferguson said: "When it comes to the health of the nation, FDF members have been working on a far-reaching health and wellbeing action plan since 2004.

"And, as a result, our industry is now widely recognised as leading the world in areas such as reformulation, labelling and workplace wellbeing."

Ferguson highlighted other challenges facing FDF members, including their efforts to reduce the environmental impact of the industry and cope with rocketing raw material and energy prices.

Ferguson added: "I am confident that our industry will rise to the challenges it will face in the year ahead. However, no part of the food chain can deliver significant change alone. It is only by collaborating, and by embracing science and innovation, that the food, farming and agri-processing sectors can deliver the best results for consumers as well as ensuring that we do so in a way that is truly sustainable."

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## Marketing Bill makes no further progress

The Food Products (Marketing to Children) Bill failed to reach committee stage after having its second reading in the House of Commons on 25th April.

We believe that the Bill's failure to progress was partly due to its disproportionate nature and partly because its backers could not provide any real evidence that the measures proposed would actually have any effect on reducing obesity beyond the efforts that the food and drink industry is already making.

One good thing to come from the lengthy debate was that it offered a chance for those opposing the Bill to detail the tremendous amount of work the industry has done to reformulate products and change its sales and marketing approaches.

Please get in touch if you would like to hear our side of the story – as a way of balancing the claims made by those who promoted this poorly-evidenced Bill.