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# TheVoice

FDF: Speaking for the food and drink manufacturing industry

## Food and drink manufacturing: a great British success story

As the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU) embarks on a major review of food and food policy, FDF is urging Government to recognise the fact that a successful food and drink manufacturing industry is vital for a healthy UK economy.

The PMSU – which is due to report next March – has been mandated to look at the main food trends; analyse the implications for society; assess the robustness of the current policy framework; and draw out the implications for future policy.

A report compiled by the University of Reading for FDF confirms that the industry is a great British success story. Author Bruce Traill says: "The industry has considerable strengths in marketing, logistics and product development that should enable it to maintain and even enhance its competitive position. However, there is considerable scope for further improvement, much of it dependent upon better collaboration between industry and Government."

### Small firms: plenty of food for thought

Small and medium sized food and drink companies attending a seminar in Leeds organised by FDF heard first hand about the ways in which they can reduce the environmental impact of their businesses.

Under the 'Food for Thought' theme, the seminar explored how companies could embrace the pillars of FDF's recently-launched Five-fold Environmental Ambition and implement the plan in their businesses (see back page for more details). Practical tips on how companies can minimise waste, while operating on a small budget, were provided by best practice body Envirowise.

The seminar was organised as part of the SME Forum established by FDF to give more focus to our work with smaller manufacturers.

## Food hygiene: FDF says public health always comes first

A European Commission proposal to exempt very small businesses from the requirement to put in place hygiene checks based on HACCP principles looks set to be dropped.

It is important to ensure that efforts are made to reduce the administrative burdens placed on small businesses. But public health must come first. In our view the current EU legislation is pretty flexible and we were concerned that a blanket exemption could lead to a rise in foodborne illnesses.

We joined forces with a number of food chain organisations and consumer groups, including Which?, to raise our concerns about the proposal with the UK Government.

Given the level of opposition to the proposal, the Portuguese Presidency has withdrawn a compromise text and will not present a new one – which we hope means the idea is now dead.

[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

## Scotland: industry hosting key debate about food policy

The Scottish Food and Drink Federation is hosting a high-profile forum in January to discuss priorities for the industry relating to the development of a National Food Policy for Scotland.

The Scottish Government's work on developing a National Food Policy began with a consultation event with representatives from a wide range of sectors, including SFDF, in early October. This was followed by a food debate in the Scottish Parliament.

A formal document will be released in January followed by a three-month consultation period. SFDF's forum is an important opportunity for the industry, which is a vital component of the Scottish economy, to make a positive contribution to this national debate.

## 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 500,000 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

*Our front cover picture was taken at Kraft's Banbury factory – which is the biggest soluble coffee factory in the world. Kraft has been a FDF member for more than 10 years.*

# Campaigners welcome FDF's bold environmental plan

FDF's bold plan to make a real difference to the environment has been well received by a wide range of key stakeholders, including Defra, the Environment Agency as well as best practice bodies such as the Carbon Trust, Envirowise, NISP and WRAP.

Our Five-fold Environmental Ambition – launched at the QEII Centre in London in October – was also welcomed by leading environmental campaigners. Jonathon Porritt, chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, described our initiatives as “hugely encouraging” while Vicki Hird, of Friends of the Earth, said our plan was “a valuable start in helping the industry steer onto a more sustainable path”.

By focusing on the five areas where we have the biggest impact - CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, landfill, packaging waste, water use and food transport miles – we are responding in a positive way to society's justifiable concerns about the future health of the planet.

If we achieve our ambitions, then we really will be making a significant difference. For instance: our aspiration on carbon emissions is to achieve a 30% reduction by 2020, which would result in savings of more than 1.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, equivalent to taking about 350,000 cars off the road per year.



*Launching the Five-fold Environmental Ambition (left to right): FDF President Iain Ferguson; Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and Fiona Dawson, chair of the FDF Sustainability and Competitiveness Steering Group*

## New labelling rules are on their way

The European Commission's new food labelling regulation is expected to be published within a matter of weeks.

FDF is hoping the regulation will provide a framework for simpler labelling that works better for consumers. While it is important to retain essential general product and food safety information, we think the Commission should take this opportunity to reduce some of the unnecessary clutter on packs – and limit any further mushrooming in the information demands placed on food and drinks labelling.