

September 2007

# TheVoice

FDF: Speaking for the food and drink manufacturing industry

## Focus on SMEs reflects their importance to the industry

FDF is committed to ensuring that small and medium sized companies have a much stronger voice within our organisation and greater involvement in our decision-making processes.

To help us achieve that ambition, we recently launched a SME Forum to give more focus to our work with smaller manufacturers. Through the Forum, our SME members will be able to have their say on the issues that matter most to their businesses, shaping the way we work on their behalf and thus ensuring that we are better able to reflect their views and concerns with Government, officials and regulators.

We will also use the Forum as a vehicle through which we will deliver tailored information, expert advice and networking opportunities that will ensure SMEs stay on top of the business-critical issues that affect their competitiveness - particularly that relating to new legislation.

## Food sector vital for the economy

A new report compiled by the University of Reading for FDF shows that a successful food and drink manufacturing industry is a vital component of a healthy UK economy.

The report confirms the industry as the UK's largest manufacturing sector, providing 470,000 jobs and accounting for 14.2% of the total manufacturing sector. Food and drink is particularly important to the local economies of Northern Ireland, Scotland, East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber.

A survey of senior company executives conducted for the report found they were optimistic about future opportunities but concerned about skills shortages, rising raw material costs and increasing competition from other parts of the world.

## EU labelling rules: FDF welcomes forthcoming review

Manufacturers and retailers met with European policy makers in Brussels recently in a workshop organised by FDF and the British Retail Consortium to exchange views on the forthcoming review of the EU food labelling regulations.

The review is good news, as there is a need to simplify and clarify the existing rules. But FDF hopes the review will be about more than merely consolidating the current regulations.

While it is important to retain essential general product and food safety information, we believe the European Commission should also reduce some of the unnecessary clutter on packs and limit any further mushrooming in the information demands placed on food and drink labelling.

A proposal is expected from the Commission by the end of the year.

[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

## New-look website helps parents with healthy lunchboxes

Affordable and pragmatic menu tips for children's lunchboxes can now be found on a new-look FDF website.

The [healthylunchbox.co.uk](http://healthylunchbox.co.uk) website has been relaunched with more information and expert advice for parents and teachers.

Research conducted for FDF by [raisingkids.co.uk](http://raisingkids.co.uk) found that almost three quarters of parents said they would find it useful to have a 'one-stop-shop', such as a website, for information on how to build a balanced packed school lunch.

Dr Pat Spungin, founder of [raisingkids.co.uk](http://raisingkids.co.uk), said: "It's great that FDF is providing this resource for busy parents, who can use it when deciding how to put together the healthiest packed lunch for their kids."

## How FDF works for its members

FDF speaks on behalf of one of the most important manufacturing sectors in the country, directly employing about 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

*Our front cover picture was taken at the Poundbury factory of Dorset Cereals, an FDF member since 2006.*

# Climate change: 'industry will play a positive role'

The food and drink industry has made great progress on key sustainability issues - but plenty of challenges still lie ahead.

That was a key message from Lord Rooker, Minister for Sustainable Food and Farming and Animal Health, to those who attended FDF's annual parliamentary reception in the House of Commons.

In particular, Lord Rooker said Government needed to work closely with the industry to tackle the threat of climate change. That required leadership and action at a whole new level, but he said he was glad to see progress was being made.

Responding, FDF president Iain Ferguson said that sustainability was one of the core priority areas for the Federation and food manufacturers wanted to be at the heart of the discussions about how industry could reduce its environmental impact.

"Food and drink manufacturers are committed to playing a positive role in the sustainability debate, working in partnership with Government, regulators and others to find solutions to the complex issues we now face," said Ferguson.

And he pointed to the progress already made by the industry. For instance: the food and drink manufacturing sector reduced its carbon emissions by just over 15% between 1990 and 2005.



**Left to right:** Iain Ferguson, FDF President and chief executive of Tate & Lyle, discusses the sustainability agenda with Lord Rooker, Minister for Sustainable Food and Farming and Animal Health, at FDF's summer reception

## GDA labelling gathers momentum

The number of food and drink companies that have introduced Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) labels has more than doubled in the six months since the launch of the food industry's campaign to introduce and explain them to shoppers.

The easily-recognisable GDA labels are now used voluntarily by 50 manufacturers, retailers and foodservice companies, and feature on the front of about 20,000 product lines, making it the most consistent, well known and widely available front-of-pack labelling scheme in the UK.

GDA labels help consumers to understand the percentage guideline daily amounts of calories, sugars, fat, saturates and salt that are in a portion of food or drink and can help them make better-informed choices.

Independent research indicates that 80% of shoppers have now seen GDA nutrition labels on food and drink products and 54% have used them.