

May 2009

# TheVoice

FDF: Speaking for the food and drink manufacturing industry

## UK is leading the rest of Europe with on-pack nutrition labelling

The first results of a major EU project on labelling clearly demonstrate that the UK is leading the way when it comes to providing Europe's citizens with clearer on-pack nutrition information. Significantly, the FLABEL project also confirms that labelling based on Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) is the most widely used scheme in the UK and is also developing rapidly across Europe.

This is just one of a number of research studies that will need to be considered carefully by policy makers in the UK and in Brussels, particularly given the fact that a future EU-wide regulatory framework for labelling is currently being negotiated.

Recently, the European Food Safety Authority has published a report that backs the science underpinning GDAs. The European Food Information Council has conducted a pan-European study into the use of nutrition information. The UK's Food Standards Agency has also published interesting research that confirms UK consumers find front-of-pack labelling valuable in helping them make better-informed food choices.

The food industry is busy digesting the results of all these studies. We remain convinced that GDAs are helping to improve the food literacy of consumers and we expect our experiences will continue to drive the debate across Europe.

## Prince commends sector's environmental work

HRH The Prince of Wales praised the "sterling things" FDF members are doing to reduce their environmental impact when he gave the keynote address at this year's May Day Summit organised by Business in the Community.

FDF's Five-fold Environmental Ambition was highlighted by the Prince as an example of how business sectors could work together to make a real difference. While sectoral approaches are important, he acknowledged that building such alliances is never easy to build or steer. Nevertheless, FDF and its members have made a collective ambition to reduce their impacts in five key areas, including CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Healthy eating on the menu for FDF annual reception

About 200 Parliamentarians, key industry players and other stakeholders will attend our annual summer Parliamentary reception on Wednesday 8 July, to discuss how our sector has responded to society's concerns about the health of the nation.

Kindly sponsored by Paddy Tipping MP, this year's reception will also mark the launch of a new report highlighting the work our member companies have done to change the recipes of popular brands so that they are lower in salt, sugar or fat.

Changing products in this way poses many technical challenges for food companies and it must be done in a way that makes no compromises on product taste or quality. Nevertheless, we estimate that since 2004 our members have reformulated approximately £15bn worth of products.

The reception is being held from 1600 to 1800hrs in the Members' Dining Room in the House of Commons. Please contact [parliament@fdf.org.uk](mailto:parliament@fdf.org.uk) for details.

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

If you want information about anything in this newsletter, please call Kate Turner on 020 7420 7129

Food and Drink  
Federation



Making a real difference

## Energy balance is the key to success in reducing obesity

FDF was pleased that the groundbreaking work undertaken by the food industry to help people lead healthier lives was highlighted in a Government report to mark the first year of its Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives obesity strategy.

It was also good to see that Government is now stressing the importance of maintaining an “appropriate energy balance” between the calories eaten and the amount of physical exercise taken. We have long argued that helping people to understand this energy balance is critical – one reason why calorie information has always been a core element of the GDA nutrition labelling scheme.

We now look forward to working in partnership with Government on its strategy and are keen to play an active role in delivering further progress in tackling obesity.

## 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 440,000 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 the industry serves:

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

*Our front cover picture was taken at the Aberystwyth factory of FDF member company Rachel's Organic.*

## Food industry leader presses for moratorium on red tape

FDF President Ross Warburton has urged Government to make a public commitment to cut unnecessary red tape as the best way of supporting the country's biggest manufacturing sector through the recession.

Speaking at our annual dinner, Warburton said: “It may sound like sacrilege to law-makers, but I think it is essential that we have a moratorium on further regulation and quasi-regulation for the food industry.”

He added: “I am not talking here about measures related to food safety. Protecting consumers is our top priority and we will always work closely with regulators to ensure people can have trust in the food they are buying.

“But we are worried about the myriad of other legislative burdens, non-evidence-based interventions, excessive social regulation, regulatory creep as well as quasi-regulation dressed up as if it had legal power, which all undermines the UK's attractiveness as a place in which to invest in manufacturing.”

Warburton said that such a moratorium should form part of a commitment by the Government to make food production a genuine strategic priority – one that is given the same level of focus as that enjoyed by other manufacturing sectors.

“The UK food and drink industry is a high value manufacturing sector offering world class capabilities in the areas of production, logistics, sales, marketing and innovation. Compared with, say, the motor industry, our sector is twice as important to the UK economy on virtually every metric. And, of course, we don't ask for state handouts when things get tough!”

More than 200 senior food industry executives, Parliamentarians and other stakeholders attended this year's dinner, at which the Government's chief scientist Professor John Beddington gave the keynote address.



*FDF President Ross Warburton: food must become a genuine strategic priority for the Government*

## Scotland's producers showcase success

The future success of Scotland's food and drink sector will be based on its ability to continue investing in product development, innovation, production efficiencies, environmental initiatives and developing a skilled workforce.

This was the key message to emerge at the seventh joint annual symposium hosted by the Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF), the Institute of Food Science and Technology and The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland.

Key figures from across the industry shared some of the secrets of their success at this year's symposium, where SFDF also unveiled video case studies it has developed to showcase the work of Scotland's biggest manufacturing sector. The videos have been made possible thanks to a Marketing Development Scheme grant from the Scottish Government.

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

If you want information about anything in this newsletter, please call Kate Turner on 020 7420 7129

Food and Drink Federation **FDF**

Making a real difference