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TheVoice

FDF: Speaking for the food and drink manufacturing industry

Government report recognises the food sector's strategic value

FDF was delighted that the Government's Food 2030 vision recognises the key economic and strategic importance of our sector for the UK – and the need for a more joined-up approach to food policy across Whitehall.

Importantly, the Government also acknowledges its role in ensuring the food and drink industry can thrive as an innovative, competitive and resilient sector – and a sustainable source of growth and jobs.

Melanie Leech, FDF Director General, said: "Manufacturers will play a vital role in meeting the increased demand for safe, nutritious and affordable food that has less impact on the environment and natural resources on which we all depend.

Our sector is already leading the way on many issues highlighted in the strategy. We now look forward to working with Government to turn words into action – ensuring food manufacturers continue to thrive so that we can provide the innovation and growth that will be vital if we are to ensure the nation's future food security."

Retail ombudsman will help smaller businesses

The Government's decision to create a new body to enforce the Groceries Supply Code of Practice will be of particular help to smaller businesses, says FDF.

That's why we welcomed the announcement by Consumer Affairs Minister Kevin Brennan MP that the Government has accepted the Competition Commission's recommendation for a supermarket ombudsman. Like others in the food chain, we are also pleased that the Conservative Party has backed the creation of the ombudsman.

FDF and its members look forward to working with Government to ensure this new ombudsman operates as an effective, low-cost monitoring and enforcement body. A first step will be to respond to the current consultation on its establishment, which seeks views on the extent of the ombudsman's power, access and funding.

FDF responds to Lords' report on nanotechnologies

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee has published a major new report on the implications of nanotechnology for the food and drink sector.

As the report acknowledges, there are many questions about the potential future uses of nanotechnologies in our sector, and there is much work still to be done by scientists, government and regulators, as well as the food and drink industry.

However, nanotechnology is still in its infancy in the food and drink sector – and bringing new innovations to market will rightly be a long and complex process – so we were surprised that the report criticised industry for an apparent reluctance to communicate extensively on this subject.

We are actively engaged in public dialogue about the use of nanotechnology at both UK and EU level, and support the report's recommendation for the formation of an open discussion group.

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If you want information about anything in this newsletter, please call Abigail Cross on 020 7420 7127

Food and Drink
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Making a real difference

Climate Change Levy discounts to cost industry £8m

FDF continues to urge the Government to reconsider its decision to amend the Climate Change Agreements with energy-intensive sectors such as food and drink manufacturing. The Treasury plans to cut the discount available under these Agreements from 80% to 65% for all fuels from 2011.

We estimate that this decision will cost our sector alone £8m a year and UK industry at least £50m a year, substantially weakening the incentive to make further investments in energy efficiency and adversely affecting the competitive standing of UK industry relative to international counterparts.

Climate Change Agreements are an effective way of reducing carbon emissions – see the story opposite – and FDF is working alongside organisations such as the Manufacturers' Climate Change Group to encourage the Treasury to rethink its plan.

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.

FDF is focusing on the issues that matter most to members and to the consumers the industry serves:

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

Our front cover picture shows one of the ways in which member company Coca-Cola Enterprises is trying to ensure it sends zero waste to landfill – one of the pillars of FDF's Five-fold Environmental Ambition.

Cuts in carbon emissions celebrated by food firms

Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Minister for Food, Farming and the Environment, helped UK food and drink manufacturers celebrate the publication of a new FDF report showing how they have cut their carbon emissions by 19% since 1990 – the equivalent of one million tonnes of CO₂.

The Minister praised our sector's efforts to reduce its environmental impact at a reception attended by 140 Parliamentarians, policy makers, industry leaders, NGOs and media.



Jim Fitzpatrick MP addresses guests at the reception

FDF members have committed to reducing their CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2010 against a 1990 baseline. The new figures – the latest available under our Climate Change Agreement with Government – show they are well on track to achieving this ambitious goal. The data also suggests that FDF members are on target to meet the longer-term aspiration of a 30% reduction by 2020.

Carbon reduction is one of the key pillars of FDF's Five-fold Environmental Ambition, which was launched in 2007 to help define how the UK's largest manufacturing sector could make a real difference to the environment.

Significant progress has been made in the other four pillars of the Ambition, which includes a commitment to send zero food and packaging waste to landfill from 2015; to make significant reductions in the levels of packaging reaching households; to embed environmental standards in food transport practices to achieve 'fewer and friendlier' food transport miles; and to use the Federation House Commitment to achieve significant reductions in water use.

FDF President Ross Warburton said: "FDF's Five-fold Environmental Ambition demonstrates the leadership our industry will show in shaping the future of sustainable food production."

Please get in touch if you would like a copy of the report.

Industry efforts on salt reduction pay off

The salt content of the food bought in UK supermarkets has reduced by the equivalent of nearly 8,000 tonnes in the past two years, according to research conducted for FDF by Kantar Worldpanel.

By analysing the information on the nutrition labels of 100,000 products bought by 25,000 households, the researchers found the net salt content of all purchases (excluding table salt) decreased by 7,667 tonnes – or 5.3% – between September 2007 to September 2009.

Julian Hunt, FDF's Director of Communications, said: "These figures reflect the successful changes made by our members to the recipes of Britain's best-loved brands over many years. Manufacturers have been working hard to reduce the salt in their products in a way that does not impact taste or quality."

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