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Food & Health Alliance Newsletter

Issue 15 July 2009

FOOD AND HEALTH

Scotland's first National Food and Drink Policy – Recipe for Success launched



Exclusive Interviews

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment and the Public Health and Sport Minister
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Edinburgh office
Woodburn House
Canaan Lane
Edinburgh EH10 4SG

Glasgow office
Elphinstone House
65 West Regent Street
Glasgow G2 2AF

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Many thanks to Andrew Cole – the writer of Food & Health, the FHA newsletter.

Thanks are also due to all the contributors of the newsletter.

This joint newsletter between the FHA and Scotland Food & Drink (SF&D) comes at an auspicious time, following hard on the heels of the launch of Scotland's first-ever National Food and Drink Policy.

It is difficult to understate the importance of this ground-breaking event and its potential to transform healthy eating attitudes and behaviour. So it's appropriate that we kick off this issue with a discussion between the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, and the Public Health and Sport Minister, Shona Robison, on the new policy and what it means.

In taking forward this policy, it is going to be important to develop a balanced approach which takes into account all aspects of sustainability – the economic impact, the environment and the health of the community. One critical element of this will be the effect of the current economic downturn on consumers' shopping and dietary habits.

Interestingly, as far as healthy eating goes, it's not all bad news. For instance, new research by the market research specialists, TNS, shows that people in Scotland are giving much greater weight to health considerations in their food choices than in the past, and this is highlighted in this issue. We also talk to Asda's Scottish Affairs Manager who describes the intriguing ways in which the recession has altered shopping habits, as well as describing some of the supermarket's food and health initiatives.

Most evidence now suggests that it will not be health education alone that will improve the nation's diet. So, collectively, we will need to work even harder to improve access to healthier foods, increase people's food knowledge, and create an environment which supports the behaviour change needed for healthy eating.

In this wide-ranging issue, we also meet the winner of the healthy eating category of the SF&D Excellence Awards; showcase exciting initiatives on reformulation and portion size; and talk to one of the latest recipients of the Healthy Working Lives Award.

There are many points to emerge from these articles, although perhaps two stand out – first, simple, small step changes can have an impact and, second, everyone has a part to play in improving the nation's diet.

Kate Barlow
Food & Health Alliance Coordinator

Give us your feedback

If you have any information or news you want to share with FHA members (the next newsletter will have a theme of healthy weight), or if you want to give us feedback on this edition, contact us by emailing pha@health.scot.nhs.uk

Recipe for Success

Scotland's first National Food and Drink Policy

To recap the development of this policy, back in the early part of 2008 the Scottish Government (SG) launched their discussion paper, *Choosing the Right Ingredients*, whereby over 500 individuals and organisations responded, including the Food & Health Alliance. From this consultation, diet and nutrition, local food and local economies, health promotion, the environment, education and access were the most important issues to be included.

Then, in June 2008, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, established five workstreams to provide recommendations.

These workstreams were as follows:

- Sustainable economic growth of the food and drink industry led by Allan Burns of Scotland Food & Drink.
- Healthy and sustainable food and drink choices led by Professor Annie Anderson of Dundee University.
- Celebrating and safeguarding Scotland's reputation as a Land of Food & Drink, supported by Martin Wishart, Restaurateur.
- Walking the talk – getting public sector procurement right led by Robin Gourlay of East Ayrshire Council.
- Food security, access and affordability led by Reverend Professor David Atkinson.

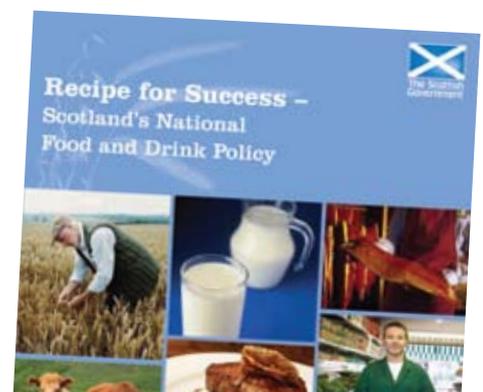
Each workstream has published a report with their recommendations.

A Food and Drink Leadership Forum was also established. Champions were appointed to reflect the key fundamentals of health, environment, affordability and the economy. The forum was tasked with making recommendations to the Scottish Government based on the workstream reports.

The champions were:

- For health, Professor Phil Hanlon of the University of Glasgow.
- For the environment, Professor Jan Bebbington of the Sustainable Development Commission and St Andrew's University.
- For the economy, Ken MacKenzie of the Scottish Retail Consortium.
- For affordability, Dave Simmers of the Community Food Initiative North East.

In addition, Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, was asked to represent the drinks industry.



Further information

The policy document and all the reports (workstream and Leadership Forum report) are all available on the Scottish Government website at www.scotland.gov.uk/food

With the launch of the first-ever National Food and Drink Policy, the Food & Health Alliance posed some questions to both the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, and the Public Health and Sport Minister about developing the policy, key points and what it means to us all.

Interview with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead



How have you found the process?

This was a very worthwhile and rewarding process. The creation of the Leadership Forum to make recommendations to the Scottish Government was an innovative approach. It allowed us to draw on a wide range of interests and expertise and, through their consideration of individual workstream reports, allowed in-depth consideration of a number of areas of common ground as well as identifying potential tensions which needed to be hit head on.

Were there any surprises or things that you didn't expect?

There were no real surprises in this process as many of the arguments have been well rehearsed. However, what was good was the willingness of individuals coming from specific interests to work together in the pursuit of a common interest.

What has been the biggest challenge when developing this policy?

We set ourselves a very challenging timetable for publishing the next steps of the National Food and Drink Policy at this year's Highland Show. Having been able to do so represents a significant contribution by the individual workstreams and the Leadership Forum. Their careful consideration has allowed us to set out the next steps as to how we will deliver our policy in pursuit of the Scottish Government's purpose of sustainable economic growth.

Was it difficult to balance the recommendations of each workstream?

The individual reports of each workstream were considered by the Leadership Forum which used the individual recommendations to identify areas of common ground and tension. Their task was not straightforward and I am very grateful for their significant effort to discuss and debate these issues to identify new ways ahead.

Which recommendations or actions do you feel will have the biggest impact?

Recipe for Success is the first time that we have produced a policy that seeks to address each sector's economic, social and environmental contribution. A lot of actions are taken forward through this framework and I think it important that we do not look at individual actions in isolation but how they contribute to each other in achieving our vision. In my two years as Rural Affairs and Environment Secretary, I have been privileged to meet many of those who are interested in Scotland's food and drink future – farmers and fishermen, processors, retailers, community food groups and health professionals to name a few. I have been impressed by their commitment to quality and meeting the needs of the consumer and wider society. The time is right to build on these excellent efforts, and for everyone in Scotland – from convenience stores and takeaways on our high streets to

‘Potentially, our biggest challenge is to maintain the significant momentum that we currently have.’

06 Recipe for Success

supermarkets, from health professionals and international companies to our fishing fleet – to meet these challenges and unleash a food and drink revolution for the good of Scotland.

What are the key points that you wish people to take from this policy?

There are many points that can be taken from this new approach but I think the key messages for me are the importance of collaborative and cooperative working across the food chain and with other interests, e.g. health professionals and education colleagues. My other take-home message would be about the importance of individuals considering the health and environmental sustainability implications of their choices.

What does it mean for stakeholders:

In terms of local government?

Recipe for Success provides a framework in which small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can better access public sector tenders and also support public sector bodies to buy healthy, sustainable food.

In terms of voluntary and community?

Through Recipe for Success we have recognised the role that community food can play and we have committed to exploiting how they can be better supported. Work such as the food networks case studies also published at the Highland Show, is an example of how we are providing practical support that individual groups can build on.

In terms of the food industry?

The food and drink industry has been identified as one of our six key sectors by the government’s economic strategy, and Recipe for Success identifies particular areas where we will work with Scotland Food & Drink and others such as local authorities and enterprise agencies to progress. Key areas of work will focus on skills, innovation and market development.

In terms of researchers and academics?

Recipe for Success highlights that a successful Food and Drink Policy is underpinned on sound science. We have created a food research group that will help us maximise the research community’s contribution to achieving our policy goals, particularly around topics such as food security and environmental sustainability.

What will be the biggest challenge you foresee when implementing this policy?

Potentially, our biggest challenge is to maintain the significant momentum that we currently have. A successful policy will only be delivered by strong collaborative working by all, with an interest in our food and drink. From what I have seen over the last two years, I am convinced that such a commitment is there.



Further information

Food Networks Guide: www.sac.ac.uk

Retailers’ Charter: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry

‘The policy recognises that we all need to play our part to improve our nation’s health.’

Interview with Public Health and Sport Minister, Shona Robison



Were there any surprises or things that you didn't expect?

I wasn't necessarily surprised but I was pleased at the extent to which people from different sectors were willing to listen and learn from each other in developing this policy. Working collaboratively to achieve economic, health and environmental benefits was key, and we can be confident that we have a policy which takes into account the views and needs of many stakeholders.

Was it difficult to balance the recommendations of each workstream?

I think that the new document has the balance just right and presents, for the first time, a policy that is integrated in its approach. For instance, you will find a health dimension to every chapter, just as you would expect elements related to the economy and sustainability.

What impact will this policy have on improving the nation's diet?

I believe the impact will be significant. The policy recognises that we all need to play our part to improve our nation's health, and that the Food and Drink Policy has an important role in helping to deliver healthy produce and encouraging people to think more about their diet. We need to build on current good practice, for example, on reformulation of products to reduce salt content, and extend these initiatives across the food industry. The supermarkets signing up to the Retailers' Charter is a significant step forward in doing just that.

What does it mean for stakeholders:

In terms of NHS staff?

NHS staff are already working very hard to ensure our health service is health promoting. Specifications for patient food in hospitals were launched last year and the policy will build on that by considering national nutritional standards for the NHS. NHS catering sites are also required to gain the healthy living award to ensure that staff and visitors have access to healthy, affordable and tasty food options.

In terms of researchers and academics?

We have identified areas where we feel it is important to improve our understanding, including food poverty, food access for vulnerable groups and how food culture impacts on our diet – researchers and academics will play a key role in boosting understanding in these areas and this work will contribute to future policy development.

What will be the biggest challenge you foresee when implementing this policy?

The sheer scope of the policy is probably our biggest challenge but that also provides the biggest opportunity for change – we can make that happen if we work together, and I see the Food & Health Alliance playing an important role here. On health, the scale of the challenge facing us, such as obesity, is huge. I do not think we could rise to that challenge without a Food and Drink Policy. The fact that health is on the agenda, alongside economic and sustainable growth, is very important and presents an exciting potential to impact positively on our health.



79% have made at least one change over the previous six months to make their diet healthier.

Recession is affecting eating habits

What influences people's eating habits? This question is at the heart of the following three articles, all of which focus on new studies into people's purchasing and consumption patterns. The studies have very different perspectives – ranging from the FSA (Scotland) to the Asda supermarket chain – but some of their findings are remarkably similar. Intriguingly, they all suggest that the recession may bring with it a health dividend.

People are eating out less and buying fewer luxury items as a result of the recession, according to the latest research from the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The survey, which involved over 3,000 face-to-face interviews across the UK, showed that 30% of the public had changed their behaviour to search out special offers, and 29% were buying fewer luxury items. Around a quarter were eating out less or having fewer takeaways, and a similar number were buying value brand foods.

Eating in vs. eating out

Eating food that is healthy (60%) is the most important consideration when people are deciding what to eat at home, followed by value for money (55%), and what the family/main shopper likes (49%).

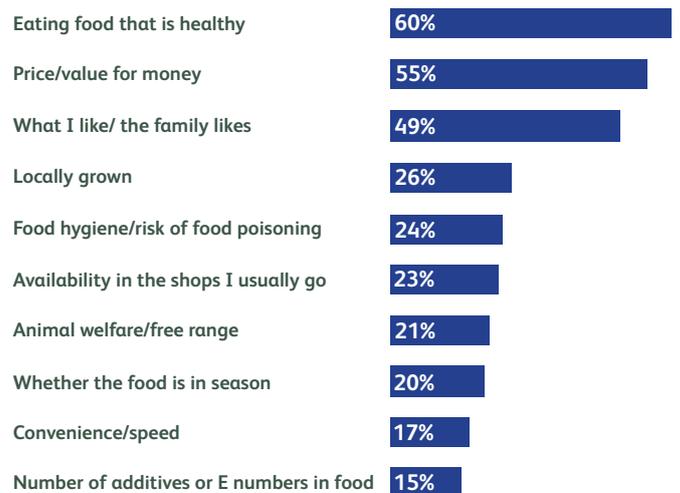
However, in general, people were less discriminating when buying food to eat outside the home. The four main criteria were: price/value for money (47%), what they like/what the family likes (43%), eating food that is healthy (40%), and food hygiene/risk of food poisoning (36%).

Three-quarters of those interviewed (73%) had made at least one change over the previous six months to make their diet healthier. Women (78%) were more likely than men (68%) to have made changes. The most common changes were trying to eat more fruit and vegetables (35%) and drink more water (34%).

Overall, results for Scotland were very similar to the UK as a whole. However, Scots are more likely to take into account what the family likes when deciding what to buy to eat at home (64% compared to the UK average of 49%), and more people in Scotland had made a change to their diet in the last six months (79% compared to 73%).

The survey was conducted by GfK NOP, with over 3,000 interviews being conducted between 9 October and 5 November 2008.

Top 10 considerations when deciding what to buy to eat at home: proportion of respondents mentioning each item (prompted) (%)



Base: All (3219)

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the FSA and GfK NOP for their permission to reproduce the above chart from Public Attitudes to Food Issues (Jan 2009).

Why tightening belts means healthier eating

Health is now the second most important factor in determining food choices.

There is no doubt that, as the recession bites, consumers in Scotland are reducing their spending on many things, including clothing, entertainment and eating out. It also seems that they are cutting back on food and drink, not so much by consuming less but by 'trading down' – that is, more shopping trips to cheaper stores and then searching out the cheaper brands within those stores.

However, one of the most interesting findings from our recent research is that, while people are spending less on food and drink, they are attaching greater importance than ever to healthy eating. 'Health' is now the second most important factor in determining food choices, and grew by 6% over the last year in Scotland compared with 1% across the UK.

At the same time, more Scots say that diet is important to them, with nearly half actively looking out for healthy products, and a similar proportion now trying to keep themselves in shape. Much of this shift in attitude has really happened over the last 12 months!

The consumer perspective

When TNS asked a cross-section of Scotland's consumers (made up of 2,500 households across Scotland) where they were looking to cut back their spending, they identified a number of areas, such as eating out, clothing and footwear, entertainment, mobile phone contracts and leisure facilities. Lower down the list of priorities was food and drink but what is interesting, is how consumers are changing their behaviour within this core area.

Although grocery inflation is now 8.7%, the inflation in actual consumer spending is only 5%, indicating that consumers are cutting back on food and drink overall by trading down retailers, as well as trading down price tiers within the store.

Meanwhile, support for regional food production remains strong, with 45% of Scottish households saying this is something they actively try to do (compared with 42% in the UK). Consumption of organic food is suffering mainly because conventional variants are cheaper although concern for animal welfare (free-range eggs, chickens etc.) is still holding up.

If this encapsulates how shoppers are behaving in the retail environment, what are people's attitudes to food and drink behind closed doors?

Health is now a prime factor in deciding what food to consume at home or to take out. It was mentioned as a primary motive by 23% of our sample (19% in Scotland) and is now second only to 'favourite'. The proportion of people who referred to health as a major motivation grew by 6% in the last year in Scotland, compared to 1% across the UK as a whole.

The graph on page 11 highlights the four-year trend in health as a primary motive for consumption and how trends are reversing for the better within Scotland.

After a decade of decline, homemade cooking increased by 4% in the last year in the UK and increased by 8% in Scotland.

10 Why tightening belts means healthier eating



What does health mean for consumers in 2009?

When we ask Scottish consumers if their diet is important to them, 42% now agree compared to 38% in 2007. A total of 22% manage this by going on a (short-term) diet to lose weight but more are now looking for a degree of balance, with 47% actively looking out for more healthy products and 46% trying to keep themselves in shape.

If there is less emphasis on short-term fixes in relation to health and diet, what steps are consumers taking around everyday health?

Consumers are definitely changing their habits within the home and not just in the store. There are several coping strategies which consumers can adopt within the home to reduce spend which can also, inadvertently, have a positive impact on diet. The main areas where consumers are changing their habits, include more cooking from scratch, as well as fewer occasions where they give themselves treats.

After a decade of decline, homemade cooking increased by 4% in the last year in the UK and increased by 8% in Scotland – a hugely significant shift in consumer lifestyle that can have a positive impact on diet. Scottish households are also more likely to cook from scratch with homemade ingredients. This accounted for 13% of all meals compared with 11% in the UK. Much of this is being driven by families and the ingredients range from savoury to sweet (home baking).

This also suggests that people are taking more time and care over what they consume, as well as seeking to be actively involved in producing these meals. An additional 3.7 million

servings of homemade stews and casseroles were consumed in Scotland over the last year, as well as 6.5 million servings of fresh fish.

Meanwhile, servings of food consumed as a treat have declined by 15% in Scotland over the last year, whereas social/entertaining occasions have grown by 10% as more consumers look to recreate the ‘eating out’ experience in their homes. This can also have a positive impact on people’s diet as there is more emphasis on sharing ‘indulgent’ food and drink within a group rather than solitary consumption.

Some of the favourite ‘treats’ include confectionery, cake bars, ice cream, burgers and more expensive cuts of red meat.

So are consumers actually eating more healthy foods?

Attitudes and perceptions are definitely changing but there is no current evidence to suggest Scottish households are consuming more fruit and vegetables. Although the UK, as a whole, consumed an additional 901 million servings of fruit and vegetables over the last year, in Scotland the figure actually fell by 85 million.

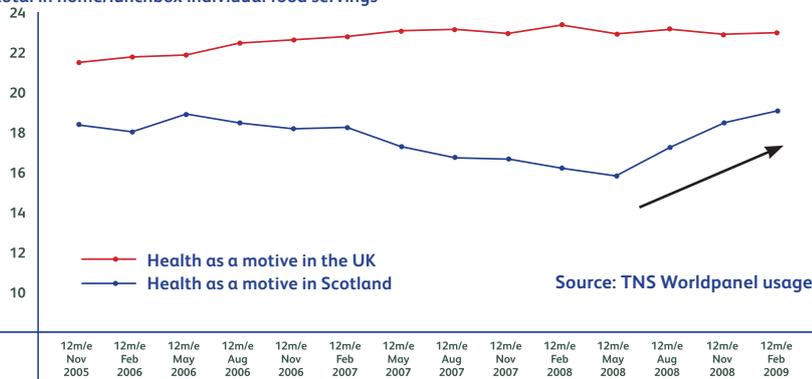
Over the latest year to February 2009, a typical adult in Scotland consumed 3 portions of fruit and vegetables a day (men – 2.9 and women – 3.2) compared to adults in England/Wales consuming 3.3 portions a day (men – 3.1 and women – 3.4).

Scottish households are more likely to consume breakfast cereal, brown bread, fresh soup and yoghurt rather than fruit and vegetables.

Scottish households are more likely to consume breakfast cereal, brown bread, fresh soup and yoghurt rather than fruit and vegetables.

Health, as one of 13 primary reasons for consuming food within the home, is now increasing in Scotland. This is extremely positive when this consumer motive is flat at a total UK level.

% of total in home/lunchbox individual food servings



What about snacking in between meals?

Impulse snacking outside the home has been declining for the past two years and Scotland simply follows the overall UK trend with impulse snacking accounting for 15.7% of all meals.

But while in-home snacking is growing in the UK, in Scotland it declined by 4%. Lunchbox activity (that is, carrying out food and drink) also declined by 2% in Scotland, while increasing by 2% across the UK.

Where next for Scotland?

Although health as a motive is becoming more relevant to Scottish consumers, there is still a bigger gap between our intentions and actual diet compared to the rest of the UK. Other motives, such as 'filling', have grown by 21% in Scotland although snacking between meals is down, which suggests people are indulging in bigger meals and home comforts. The challenge is to inform and educate Scottish consumers about routes to health at a time when they are certainly becoming more receptive to this message. There is evidence that some meal ingredients are becoming healthier (fresh meat, fish etc.) but there is room for improvement with vegetables as well as fruit for a snack.

Mark Thomson
Client Insight Director, TNS

How Asda is selling the healthy eating message

Asda are reducing salt content in its foods, reaching the FSA 2010 reduction target two years ahead of schedule and eliminating 400 tonnes of salt in the process.



Asda accounts for 16.5% of food sales in Scotland.

How Asda is selling the healthy eating message 13

There is no doubt that supermarkets have a vital role to play in healthy eating in Scotland. With the 'big four' responsible for more than three-quarters of the food market, what they sell and how they sell are critical to changing habits. Asda – which accounts for 16.5% of food sales in Scotland – is certainly taking those responsibilities seriously. For instance, it was the first to introduce combined traffic light and guideline daily amounts (GDA) percentage labelling on all its own products.

But that, of course, is only part of the story. The truth is that, for supermarkets, the bottom line is not health promotion but turnover. This means that 'red light' food will continue to retain a prominent place in some aisles.

In addition, as Asda's own customer research shows, many barriers to healthy eating are erected by the public themselves. So, for instance, two major factors dissuading customers from buying healthy food is that they think it's more expensive and will not taste as good.

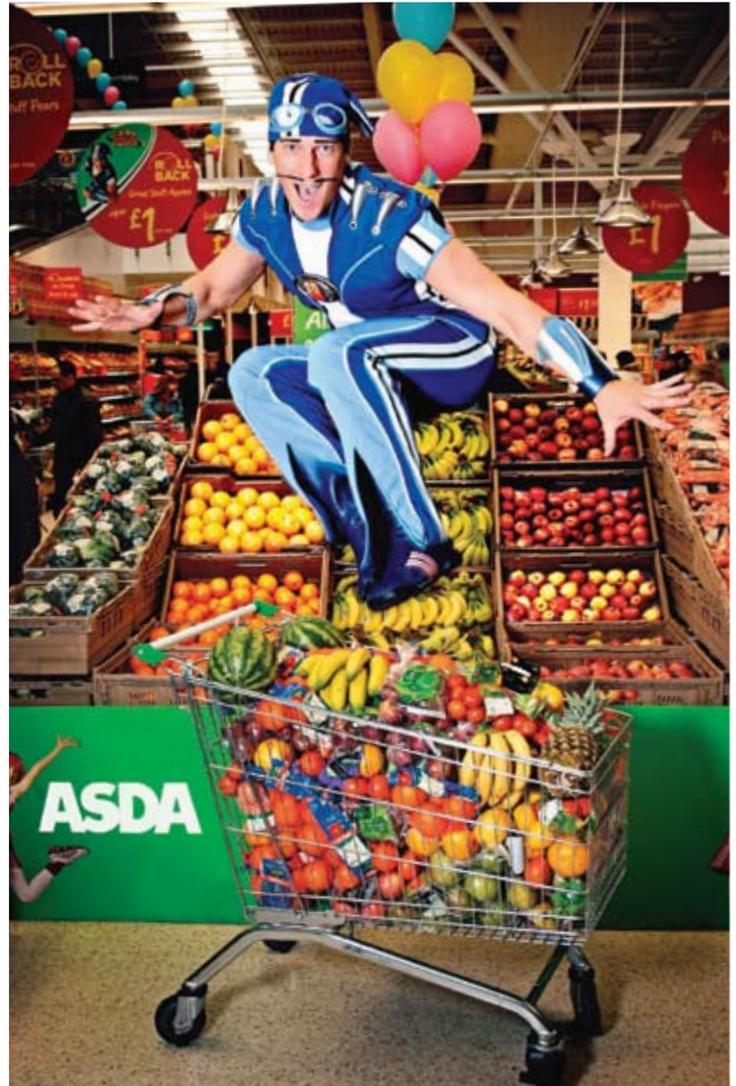
According to David Paterson, Asda's Scottish Affairs Manager, a combination of factors can lie behind people's failure to eat more healthily. 'In some cases, it's a lack of knowledge of cooking skills. In other cases, they don't know what a healthy diet looks like, though more and more people know about that now. But there's still a challenge in how to implement that in people's daily lives.'

So what is Asda doing to counter this?

'Top of the agenda is better, clearer information,' says David. In 2007, Asda was the first to introduce a dual labelling system on the front of all its packaging.'

Asda has also been in the vanguard of reducing salt content in its foods, reaching the FSA 2010 reduction target two years ahead of schedule and eliminating 400 tonnes of salt in the process.

In addition, Asda introduced a range of low fat and reduced calorie foods as well as a popular children's healthy eating range called Good Stuff. 'Families with young children are one of the most health conscious groups,' says David. 'Our research tells us they are extremely keen to get a healthy balanced diet and that's a big driver for them. Mums want their kids to take healthy food into school but don't always know what the right things should be.'



‘We’re about to embark on a school project to develop a vegetable garden so children can learn where their food comes from.’

14 How Asda is selling the healthy eating message

Healthier habits

Interestingly, the recession may be playing a part in encouraging healthier habits. Over the last year, the supermarket has noticed a significant shift from ‘frivolous’ to ‘frugal’ behaviour, says David.

This means customers are buying fewer ready meals and, instead, more basic ingredients so they can cook the meals themselves. They’re focusing more on price and value, buying more frozen food, and showing less interest in 2-for-1 deals where food may go to waste.

All this provides a real opportunity to encourage healthier, more sensible eating. ‘But I don’t think it necessarily goes hand in hand,’ David warns. ‘One of the main barriers is a lack of cooking skills.’

Asda is trying to fill this gap through its recipe cards, which give details on a range of healthy family meals, as well as through healthy recipes contained in its in-store magazine.

The next step

The real test, however, is teaching people how to cook in the first place. ‘We are trying to work out how you physically show people within the supermarket how you do these things,’ says David. ‘In many cases, this sort of knowledge is passed on through families but, in some, that simply hasn’t happened. That can be a bit more of a challenge for retailers.’

Asda is looking closely at what it can do in this area and again sees the next generation as key. ‘We’re about to embark on a school project to develop a vegetable garden so children can learn where their food comes from and what a healthy diet looks like. The kids will grow their own veg from scratch, tour a local store to see healthy produce in the supermarket, cook their own vegetables, and involve parents through a community day where they can sell some of their own food. If it’s successful, we’ll look at rolling it out more widely.’

So are any of Asda’s initiatives having a measurable effect?

David admits it’s early days. Recent promotions on fruit and vegetables have sold ‘fantastically’ while the children’s Good Stuff range is also proving very popular.

He also points out that the customers’ views about healthy eating can be very different from the experts. ‘Many people’s perception of how healthy their diet is will be

whether they can fit into a pair of jeans they like or how their weight compares with their peer group. These are things we need to be aware of.’

Supermarkets can only do so much to change this mindset. ‘Sometimes people believe supermarkets have the power to influence everything our customers buy, but that’s far from the truth,’ he says. ‘Customers drive supermarkets as much as supermarkets drive customers.’

‘The important point is that you can’t turn things around quickly – it will take time. We must show some leadership, yes, but we can’t leave our customers behind.’

The key is making the healthy eating messages as positive and engaging as possible. ‘We’re looking to help them rather than beat them over the head.’

Having said that, supermarkets have some unique strengths. ‘We do have an insight into how customers think and we’re able to react to trends. We’re able to get some messages out although you have to remember this is a very crowded market place.’

‘Ultimately people go there to buy food,’ he notes, ‘and the more you try and put out a myriad of messages, the greater the danger of diluting them. You do get some initiatives where you do too much and customers simply switch off. We have to be careful to put out the right messages at the right time.’

Further information

www.asda-feelgood.co.uk

www.asda-thebinks.co.uk

Healthy T is an important component of the overall festival experience.

Small steps to producing healthier options 15

Small steps to producing healthier options

Many said that they chose to eat exclusively at Healthy T and some said it was their favourite part of the whole festival.



The Healthy T area at this year's popular T in the Park was substantially increased in size following its huge success last year. Over the course of the weekend in July, many of the 80,000 young fans who flocked to hear the Kings of Leon, Elbow and Lily Allen were also seen enjoying the healthy food, fruit, and non-alcoholic drinks on offer from the Healthy T global kitchen, which was developed in partnership with the Scottish Government, Big Day Out Ltd and Tennents Lager.

In fact, the arena was one of the event's big hits. Many said they chose to eat exclusively at Healthy T and some said it was their favourite part of the whole festival.

The organisers, Big Day Out, enlarged the healthy food area and put in more seats after last year's increased demand.

Putting good food on the festival map

'We were delighted by the success of Healthy T last year,' said Hilary Goodfellow, Project Manager for Healthy T. 'Traditionally, eating at festivals was more about sustenance rather than something to be enjoyed, but Healthy T is an important component of the overall festival experience.'

'Healthy T sets out to prove that enjoying tasty, healthy food doesn't need to hurt your pocket and can be just as pleasurable as watching the bands. Festivals are frantic affairs, so making sure you're eating well helps ensure you'll last the pace.'

All traders in the Healthy T arena have to adhere to the Scottish Government's healthy eating criteria, which includes stipulating that products are to be baked, not fried. Examples of changes this year include one trader making healthier tempura batter and another investigating dry frying rather than deep frying falafels. Healthy T also offered gluten-free pizza and toppings for baked potatoes for coeliacs.

The main criteria for foods sold in this area are that they should be low in saturated fat, salt and sugar with an emphasis, where possible, on Scottish ingredients and low food miles. And they must be affordable!

The area hasn't just been a big hit with the fans – many of last year's traders specifically asked to return to trade within Healthy T. In addition, Big Day Out has both been approached by, and has approached, new traders for the area.

The area wasn't just a big hit with fans – many of the traders asked to return to trade in Healthy T this year.

16 Small steps to producing healthier options



One of the highest profile participants last year was Argyll Food Producers who also won this year's Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Award for Success Through Working in Partnership.

Development Manager, Fergus Younger, said it was very rewarding to get such enthusiastic feedback. 'The crowd in Healthy T were so glad it was there and happy to have some real food. Scotland is often called the sick man of Europe – Healthy T demonstrates that we do not need to be with such great food on offer.'

Embracing change

Many of the producers involved last year had to make small changes in order to meet the healthy eating standards stipulated by one of Healthy T's developers, the Scottish Government.

These ranged from the addition of salad to burgers and rolls; swapping from white burger rolls to wholemeal or granary rolls; an increased amount of fruit or vegetables; reducing portion sizes; using low calorie sunflower spread and low fat mayonnaise; and making sure water, fruit juice and diet drinks were available.

So, for instance, the portions of sticky toffee pudding, produced by Bumble Puddings, had to be smaller than usual and served with low fat custard.

'Bumble' Marshall (real name Alexandra but 'no one calls me that'), who produces the puddings as well as a range of other foods, was initially a bit sceptical about this. However, she admits the smaller portions proved a big hit with the fans. 'Nobody said they hadn't had enough and everybody seemed to enjoy it with custard... the response was really great. In fact, we came close to selling out.'

She is now seriously thinking about reducing the portion size of her puddings in future and charging less. 'I think that's probably the way to go and I would say it helps to make people feel a bit better about themselves.'

The government's requirement that only wholemeal bread would be allowed for sandwiches, rolls and burgers also took some of the producers aback. There were concerns, not only about taste, but also costs – white bread lasts longer so is likely to lead to less waste.

‘We are seriously thinking about reducing the portion size of puddings in future and charging less.’

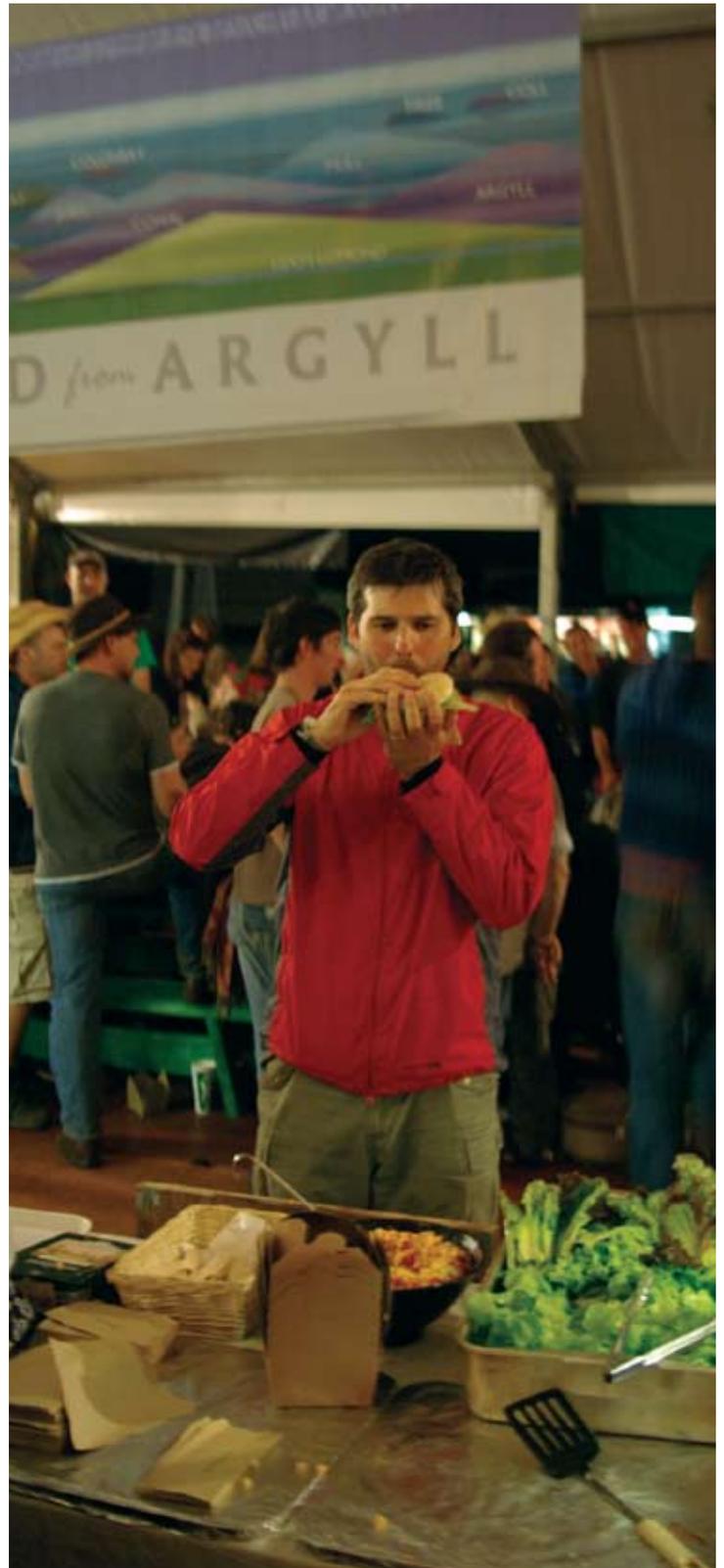
Small steps to producing healthier options 17

However, Virginia Sumsion, Marketing Manager with Loch Fyne Oysters, admits it worked so well she may consider using wholemeal bread more widely in future.

Part of the secret, she believes, was that the Healthy T area was both welcoming and completely clear about what it was selling. ‘I think it went much better than any of us expected. I was a bit nervous beforehand because T in the Park is directed at such a young group and we were concerned they might not be interested in what we offer.’

‘But we found there was a market for people wanting to eat good food. And it’s amazing how much people eat at festivals! People were coming back two or three times for our food.’

The popularity of the area will not have gone unnoticed by the other traders. Might this clear public appetite for healthier options help challenge them to adjust their menus?



Oil's well that ends well for Mark

Extra virgin rapeseed oil has a lower percentage of saturated fats than other virgin oils.

The last couple of years have been something of a rollercoaster for Mark Bush. Two years ago he was still working as an IT consultant with an investment bank in London. However, back in May, he picked up the prestigious Healthy Eating Award for his new extra virgin rapeseed oil at Scotland's food 'Oscars', the Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards in Glasgow.

The transformation in Mark's life began in August 2007 when he decided to quit the city and move with his wife to sample the good life in Scotland, initially selling potatoes from his father-in-law's farm, Ferneyfold Farm in Crieff, at local farmers' markets.

However, after seeing how passionate the public were about good, healthy food, he had an idea. Why not turn some of the rapeseed grown at the farm for margarine production into high quality extra virgin oil which could be sold in local shops and markets?

The first batch was piloted just over a year ago at a number of local farmers' markets and proved an instant hit. Three months later, he began producing the distinctive Summer Harvest bottles of cold-pressed rapeseed oil in earnest and success quickly followed.

Mark admits that initially people had a few concerns about the oil because of some of the bad publicity surrounding the plant 'but as soon as they tasted it, we had our sale.'

The 250ml and 500ml bottles – costing between £3.50 and £6 – are now available in around 40 local shops, as

well as local farmers' markets, and are also used by several restaurants in the area.

One of the big selling points is that the oil has a lower percentage of saturated fats than other virgin oils, as well as being high in omega 3 and vitamin E. The secret, says Mark, is using a cold press to extract the oil. 'We could get more oil out of the seeds if we heated them but then it would be thinner and no different from general vegetable oil, so what would be the point?'

Not surprisingly, he is evangelical about the benefits of rapeseed oil, noting it has a more subtle flavour than most olive oils as well as being excellent in cooking, particularly for roasting. He also believes it could help convert many people to salads who have been put off by the heavier taste of olive oil.

Healthy eating has always been important to Mark – perhaps not surprisingly given that he himself suffers from high cholesterol. He's also a strong advocate of using local products, wherever possible, which is why he is concentrating on the local markets of Glasgow, Edinburgh and central Scotland.

Reaping the awards...

All the hard work culminated last month when he and his wife attended the 2009 Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards at Glasgow's Kelvingrove Museum and came away with two awards – the Healthy Eating Award sponsored by the FHA and the Soup, Preserve, Accompaniments Award.

Mark didn't have time to get nervous before the first award

Winner of the healthy eating category of Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards.

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because it was the first one presented. But, after waiting until the penultimate award of the evening before learning he had won the healthy eating accolade, 'I was really shot to bits and didn't particularly enjoy that part of the evening.'

'But when they announced I had won the second time that was a truly joyful moment, though it was mixed with relief.'

He feels the judges were brave to award the healthy eating prize to an oil. 'You don't immediately think of oil as part of healthy eating but the truth is that you can cut down on sugar and salt, and cut out fatty products, but at some point you have to use oil and this is one of the healthiest ones there is.'

Further information

www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org

www.summerharvestoils.co.uk or contact

Mark at: mark@summerharvestoils.co.uk

Burgers back on the menu?

QMS launched a 'toolkit' to enable all meat producers to develop healthier red meat products by reducing fat and salt levels.

For many people, burgers epitomise the type of junk food that is the enemy of healthy eating.

However, for Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) – the body that supports and promotes the red meat industry – food such as burgers and sausages can be developed to a healthier specification.

QMS has been working with a number of meat producers over the last six months to produce a range of processed meat products containing reduced fat and salt. It is also hoping it will prove attractive, not only to school meals planners, but to other public sector areas, such as hospitals and prisons.

QMS Communications Director, Louise Welsh, says the idea came to her after reading an article last year where a Glasgow councillor bemoaned the fact that school meals had become less popular since schools followed Jamie Oliver's lead and started producing healthier options.

The situation was so bad, he added, they might have to consider putting burgers back on the menu just to make sure children signed up for school meals.

'That irritated me,' says Louise, 'because actually, depending on how they're made, burgers can be a very nutritious part of a healthy balanced diet.'

As a result, she began looking into the idea of producing healthier, reformulated meat that would be attractive to the school meals buyers and might act as a 'hook' for more children to start eating school meals again.

Since late last year, QMS has been working with eight Scottish meat companies to reformulate a number of red meat products, including beef and lamb burgers, pork, beef, haggis, black pudding and bacon, to ensure they have lower salt and fat content while retaining their taste and essential constituents.

The work, which is supported by Scottish Enterprise funding, has taken place in conjunction with Food Innovation@ Abertay in Dundee. In June, it came to fruition when QMS launched a 'toolkit' to enable all meat producers to develop healthier red meat products by reducing fat and salt levels.

'For some producers, the new guidelines may not require any changes,' says Louise. 'Others may need to 'tweak' a few things to meet the suggested requirements but the end result should be good news.'

'If we can produce tasty burgers that people will like and also tick the box of meeting demands for lower fat and salt, that must be a good thing,' she says.

She also believes it could lead to a significant increase in school meals uptake. 'Popular staples like burgers and sausages could play an important role in helping schools. At the same time, our meat companies get the chance of putting meat produced in Scotland on more people's plates.'

Supported by Scottish Enterprise funding
in conjunction with Food Innovation@Abertay
in Dundee.

Burgers back on the menu? 21



Further information
www.qmscotland.co.uk
or contact Louise directly at
lwelsh@qmscotland.co.uk

5.7 tonnes of the company's produce was consumed in staff homes in 2008.

22 Parripak's efforts translate into success

Parripak's efforts translate into success

A Polish translation service might not seem at first glance to be that relevant, either to the production of prepared vegetables or improving the health of the workforce.

However, for Gretna-based Parripak (who previously operated for 25 years as Solway Veg Ltd), which processes raw vegetables for the supermarket, hotel and restaurant trade, it was a small but important step in attaining its Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Bronze Award earlier this year.

The company introduced a number of healthy initiatives as part of its bid, including a smoking cessation scheme that was open to its entire 100-strong workforce. The only problem was that a significant proportion of its staff are from Eastern Europe and so were unable to understand all the literature.

After representations by staff, the company decided to ask one of its Polish-speaking staff members to translate all the leaflets into Polish – a language most Eastern Europeans can understand. The result, according to Project Manager Malcolm Laidlaw, is that two Polish members of staff have now quit the habit, which is, of course, exactly what Healthy Working Lives is all about.

The Healthy Working Lives Awards Programme aims to help organisations develop health promotion and safety themes in their workplace in a way that's beneficial to both the group and its staff.

Malcolm says that the Gretna branch of Parripak decided to work for the Bronze Award last year because it wanted to promote a health and safety initiative focused, not just on regulations, but on the staff themselves.

He admits he didn't realise quite what he was letting himself in for when they began. Achieving the Bronze Award has taken nearly a year and involved not only meeting basic health and safety criteria, but also setting up a working group

and conducting a health needs assessment of the whole workforce to establish priorities.

This, in turn, led to the smoking cessation scheme as well as promoting stress, breast and skin cancer awareness, and encouraging healthy eating in the workplace and at home.

The company had a head start with healthy eating because it was already running a weekly scheme selling its vegetables – mainly potatoes, carrots and swedes – to its staff, at cost price. The scheme has been extremely popular and resulted in 5.7 tonnes of the company's produce being consumed in staff homes in 2008.

Parripak is now working for its Silver Award which it hopes to achieve by early next year. Projects include a sponsored slim and a number of initiatives to cut waste. In the next few months, it is also hoped to begin stress awareness training and to institute a company-wide drugs and alcohol policy.

The sponsored slim has already attracted interest with four members of staff taking part and managing to shed a combined stone in weight in their first four weeks. Richard Smith, the Dumfries and Galloway HWL Adviser, made several visits to offer advice on healthy eating and exercise targets and has been suitably impressed. 'They certainly are taking this very seriously,' he observes.

'It's all a matter of continuing to build on what you've already done,' explains Malcolm. Might they consider going for the Gold Award after Silver? 'Obviously we'd like to, but it all depends how realistic that is.'

'Working for the HWL Awards has been a valuable exercise for the organisation,' he says, 'and it's also proved popular with many staff.'

'We've achieved what we hoped to achieve, that is giving the site a people-based award and also giving something back to our staff in terms of improving health and safety, and raising awareness of various health-related issues.'

Parripak is part of the William Jackson Group who are also a member of the Food and Drink Federation.

Further information

www.healthyworkinglives.com

www.parripak.co.uk

SCHWL has teamed up with the Scottish Food and Drink Federation and FHA to promote healthier lifestyles among those employed within the industry.

Health and safety drive for food and drink workforce 23

Health and safety drive for food and drink workforce

Scottish food and drink companies are being targeted in a national pilot aimed at improving the health and safety of employees.

The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives (SCHWL) has teamed up with the Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF) and the Food & Health Alliance (FHA) to promote healthier lifestyles among those employed in the industry.

Flora McLean, Director of the Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF) said:

'Food and drink manufacturers in Scotland have long recognised the importance of ensuring the wellbeing of their workforce. By working with our partners in the FHA and the SCHWL, SFDF has supported our members in keeping health at the top of their agendas. It also shows that the food and drink manufacturing industry is an exemplar when it comes to the promotion of healthy lifestyles at work.'

Under the pilot project, seven leading food and drink manufacturers will be given easy access to support and guidance on promoting health within the workplace, advice on occupational health issues and information on the latest health and safety legislation.

They will also be encouraged to sign up to the SCHWL's Healthy Working Lives Award, which recognises employers who take initiatives to boost health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Pinney's, International Fish Cannery, Macphie of Glenbervie and Uin Foods are all signed up to the pilot. Nairn Oatcakes, Burtens Biscuits and Matthew Algie have all indicated interest in the project.

Nina Torbett, Health Promotion Development Manager at the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, said:

'By joining forces with SFDF and FHA we are helping employers and employees come together to promote healthier lifestyles within the workplace.'

'The food and drink industry is a key focus for the centre as it employs thousands of people working in an environment where there are many health and safety implications.'

'The centre has 80 advisers around Scotland to provide information on a range of issues from smoking cessation, healthy eating, physical activity and mental health promotion, as well as increasing the importance of health and safety.'

The food and drink industries have one of the highest injury rates of all manufacturing industries. Between April 1998 and March 2008, nearly 89,000 staff reported an injury to the Health and Safety Executive. The sector is now paying greater attention to occupational health issues such as back injuries, stress, occupational asthma and dermatitis.

Macrae will be the 1000th organisation to register for the Healthy Working Lives Award.



Further information
www.healthyworkinglives.com

FOOD AND HEALTH

food & health
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So why not get involved?

Food & Health Alliance (FHA) is a network which:

- connects people to information
- connects people with each other
- connects people to policy.

Membership of the Food & Health Alliance entitles you to:

- all the latest information through monthly news updates and a quarterly newsletter
- access to the FHA website www.fhascot.org.uk
- invitations to FHA events including the annual conference.

Membership is FREE and open to a broad range of people, organisations and sectors.

It only takes a minute to sign up. To find out more, visit:

www.fhascot.org.uk

FHA News

The FHA annual conference is on **17 November 2009** at the **Edinburgh Conference Centre**.

More information will be posted on the website shortly or email fhq@health.scot.nhs.uk