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Sainsbury's "working towards" welfare-compliant pork

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

Supermarket group J Sainsbury's claims to be making greater effort to source pork that is compliant with UK welfare standards, in light of ongoing concerns over the use of non own-label brands to supply imported meat.

Sainsbury's asserts that it is working to ensure that all its pork meets British welfare standards, including imported meats.

"We are now working towards sourcing pork that meets the UK welfare standards," a Sainsbury's spokesperson told Meat Info. "We hope to have new suppliers in place soon."

It is hoped that this will counter concerns over the quality of foreign-sourced pork available in Sainsbury's supermarkets.

Sainsbury's is one of a number of UK supermarkets to have faced criticism for supplying imported pork under tertiary brands. The main problem is that these brands can be used to offer consumers meat that does not meet UK welfare standards whilst lacking clarity on country of origin.

Figures from the National Pig Association suggest that over 850,000 tonnes of pork entered the UK last year, some 70 per cent of which would not have met UK welfare standards.

Cheese weighing machine 'increases productivity'

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

A new high-performance cheese weighing system has been successfully implemented into the operations of a Welsh cheese manufacturer, aiming to improve efficiency and boost productivity.

Supplied by Applied Weighing the new system offers precise weighing for separate towers of cheese, designed to eliminate error that can arise from weighing different amounts during the production process.

One of the key features of the new system is improved communication between various stages of production, facilitating any necessary corrections that need to be made.

Since adopting the system Aeron Valley Cheese has seen improved efficiency in its cheese production. Chief engineer Edward Evans highlights the benefits of the process and working with Applied Weighing.

"The system has helped us more than we could have hoped," he told Processing Talk.

"We will certainly invite them to tender for any further weighing systems we may need in the future."

Aeron Valley produces a variety of different cheeses including Cheddar, Curd, Red Leicester and double Gloucester, all of which can utilise Applied Weighing's system in production.

Recent reports indicate that the number of dairy farmers in Wales is falling, down to under 3,000 last year from almost 4,500 in 1991.

Survey highlights healthy eating disparity

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

A new survey has found a large disparity between what Britons say they ought to do regarding their health and what they actually do.

As the government works to encourage healthier eating and drinking and many firms, particularly Pepsi with its recent purchases, reposition themselves as 'healthy', they may in fact only be responding to what consumers say they want, rather than what they will respond to.

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak and consumers still indulge in a debits and credits consumption pattern," commented Matt Jones, consumer markets analyst at Datamonitor and author of the report.

"Consumers are now looking at overall health solutions, rather than concentrating on individual quick fixes."

For instance, while 84 per cent of British consumers said that they feel it is important to improve their health through diet, only 62 per cent have taken steps to do so.

However, the survey also found that a third of consumers want more access to healthier products, with sales of 'nutraceuticals' - food and drinks that are beneficial to health - are set to grow by an annual rate of 5.4 per cent between 2005 and 2010 to reach £611.7m.

"It is the complexity of health, coupled with an intention behaviour gap, that is causing UK consumers to become more unhealthy," concluded Mr Jones, dismissing claims that obesity is solely due to food.

Poor harvest drive up cereal prices

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

A combination of poor harvest and increasing demand for biofuels has forced up the price of cereal worldwide, according to a report from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO).

Costs have been predicted to reach levels not seen since the 1990's, based on the findings of the FAO's Food Outlook report.

Many of the UK's farmers are currently looking into the money-making possibilities presented by transferring some of their operations to fuel production as demand increases and this is factor around the world is having an knock-on affect on cereal prices.

The report released recently by FAO read: "Poor harvests in key producing countries and a fast-growing demand for biofuel production have driven up grain prices, while supply constraints have also dominated the rice economy."

According to the president of the National Farmers' Union Peter Kendall, the government's pre-budget report demonstrated that bioenergy "has a real and growing role to play in the future of the country".

Efsa re-evaluates food additive laws

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

The European Food Safety Authority (Efsa) is to initiate a re-evaluation process over the issues surrounding food additives and colourings in the interest of consumer health and at the request of the European Commission.

New data has become available since the safety of food additives was last properly assessed and manufacturers will be asked to assist with the re-evaluation process, Efsa explains.

Having already contacted a number of groups with specific requests for help with relevant data collection, Efsa is now also calling on any third party in a position to assist to do so via their website.

A statement from the authority read: "Efsa is giving top priority to colours, as requested by the commission, because they were among the first additives to be evaluated under European legislation and several new studies have become available since the original assessments were done."

Formed in 2002, Efsa was originally set up to provide greater reassurance to European consumers over issues of food safety across the continent.

Datamonitor makes drinks predictions

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

Researchers at Datamonitor have made their predictions for 2007, saying that it will see the further emergence of calorie-burning beverages, satiety-enhancing products and immunity-boosting foods and drinks.

These all form part of the up-and-coming trends in food and drink products next year, Datamonitor claims, highlighting Coca-Cola and Nestle's green tea drink, Enviga, as well as

Celsius, both of which claim to help people lose weight while drinking them.

In addition to Coke and Nestle's Enviga green tea drink, Celsius is a beverage that aims to burn calories, with ingredients including green tea with EGCG, caffeine and ginger.

Satiety-enhancing foods and drinks will aim to give the consumer a sense of fullness, which should limit their appetite and thus lead to weight loss.

In addition, more immunity-boosting foods and drinks will appear in shops next year 2007, with consumers expected to buy probiotic and other similar products as the flu season begins.

Food residue results "should reassure consumers"

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

The chairman of the pesticide residue committee (PRC) Dr Ian Brown has suggested that consumers can be reassured by the latest findings regarding the pesticide levels of foods eaten in Britain.

According to the committee's quarterly report, 1.7 per cent of foods sampled contained pesticide residues above the legal limit, but experts are convinced that this does not pose a threat to human health.

While a number of foods, including cheese, bacon and shellfish were found to be free from any pesticides, there were 33.3 per cent of foods with residues below legal limits.

Dr Brown commented: "The results should reassure consumers that the food they eat continues to be safe."

"It is important to stress that the positive effects of eating fresh fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced healthy diet far outweigh any concern about pesticide residues," he added.

The PRC states that it seeks to ensure that the food industry understands the issues surrounding pesticide residues levels in British foods.

Global food imports to hit new high

Date: Fri, 08 Dec 06

Story Text

A new report from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) has revealed that the world is set to spend more on food stuff imports than ever before.

The FAO's Food Outlook study this year suggests overall expenditure on food imports during 2006 will hit \$374 billion, close to £200 billion, which works out to around two per cent more than during 2005.

Softening prices in the global dairy market seen in early 2006 are likely to rise due in part to "negative expectations" for milk production in the European Union, the FAO has also predicted.

"Import bills for developing countries are anticipated to rise by almost five per cent from 2005, mainly as a result of price increases rather than an increase in the actual volume of food imports," the FAO states.

Jacques Diouf of Senegal is the current director general of the FAO, having been re-elected to a third six-year term in office in January of this year.

Booths named runner-up in global food retailer study

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

The north-west supermarket chain Booths has been named the second best food retailer in the world, it has been revealed.

Following an evaluation of competitors by industry analysts, fellow retailers and suppliers, Booths was voted the second best worldwide, reports the Lancashire Evening Post.

The US-based Whole Food Market was declared the overall winner, meaning that the Preston-based chain has effectively been recognised as the best in its field in Europe.

Edwin Booth, chairman of the family-owned supermarket, has attributed its success in part to a strong local emphasis.

"We were founded in the north-west back in 1847 and still only trade in four counties in the region with continual investment in those areas," he explained.

Moreover, Mr Booth said that he hoped the industry recognition would ultimately be translated into sales and "floods of customers coming through our doors to buy good food and drink".

The supermarket aims to source its products from local suppliers wherever possible.

Last week, Lancashire-based dairy Bowland Fresh announced that it had agreed a contract to deliver local organic milk to the chain.

Research team to tackle foot and mouth disease

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

In a new research initiative, which could help prevent a disease outbreak affecting food supplies around the UK, a team of Leeds scientists are to study the spread of foot and mouth disease.

Over the course of 2001, millions of livestock had to be destroyed at great costs to farmers and to the country at large, a situation researchers hope their work will ultimately stop from happening again.

Work will focus primarily on how the foot and mouth disease virus (FMDV) is able to spread and how it is initially contracted by livestock, which it is hoped will open up a route to a cure for the high profile disease.

Professor David Rowlands, who is heading the research team, explains said: "Our work has shown that equine rhinitis virus appears to use a similar mechanism to FMDV, so we're confident it will work as an effective model for the virus."

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs explains that while FMDV is not often fatal for adult hoofed animals, it does cause debilitation and loss of productivity.

Fish firm expects big catch this Christmas

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

One of the most well known seafood brands in the country is expecting to net some big profits over the coming weeks, as its sales of smoked salmon look likely to increase dramatically during the Christmas period.

Young's is confident it can bring in around one-fifth of its annual sales of smoked salmon products during the two weeks around Christmas and the new year.

The company now has a host of products in its smoked salmon range, including a number of speciality varieties, according to a report from FISH update magazine.

Yvonne Adam of Young's is quoted as saying: "These products feature superb quality salmon, produced using traditional methods and with all the experience and heritage of our Fraserburgh smokehouse."

Young's claims to source as many as 60 different species of seafood from a total of 30 countries worldwide and its company history dates back some 200 years.

'More accurate' drink test developed

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

Scientists have discovered a more accurate way to quantify levels of vitamin B12 in beverages.

The Reading Scientific Services Ltd (RSSL) researchers claim that their test is accurate to 0.02µg/100ml down to levels of 0.1-0.2µg/100ml of vitamin B12, which is also known as cobalamin.

"It's a significant breakthrough," said Marta Ahijado of RSSL's functional ingredients laboratory.

"Clients can now provide reliable data to support labelling claims in respect of one of their key ingredients, where it was once impossible to do so."

According to the firm, this test can produce results where traditional methods give "less than detection limit" and states that the process is validated and UKAS accredited.

However, RSSL will not release the exact methodology that allows such accuracy, only revealing that the process is based upon its Biacore instrumentation which is used for accurate testing of other B vitamins.

Vitamin B12 is said to help boost energy and its primary functions include the formation of red blood cells and maintenance of a healthy nervous system.

Brits urged to buy 'freer turkeys'

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

Millions of British people are likely to be tucking into a turkey on Christmas day and the RSPCA is urging consumers to buy what it suggests are freer birds to feed the family.

The animal welfare group wants to see as many turkeys as possible sold in Britain to have been reared with more space, in line with its own standards.

To this end the RSPCA introduced a farm assurance scheme in 1994, which allows producers to label those birds farmed under conditions which meet with the organisation's criteria as Freedom Foods.

Christmas is prime time for turkey producers in the UK, who reared as many as 21 million birds of food last year alone.

Steven Tait, head of Freedom Food sales and marketing, said: "We hope to see more retailers stocking the product in the near future and are asking consumers to help us achieve our aim to improve turkey welfare, by choosing Freedom Food this Christmas."

Founded in 1824, the RSPCA affords its Â£82 million a year running costs through charitable donations and legacies.

Farming chiefs look to cut costs to industry

Date: Thu, 07 Dec 06

Story Text

In an effort to make Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) regulations less costly for the country's poultry farmers, Lord Rooker, minister of state for sustainable farming and food, is to listen to the views of the farming community.

Director general of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Richard McDonald is to meet with Lord Rooker to discuss ways in which the aims of IPPC regulations might be incorporated within existing farm assurance schemes.

Mr McDonald says he will canvass opinion from a number of other organisations with an interest in poultry farming, before presenting the case for less expensive regulation controls to the government representative.

NFU director of policy Martin Haworth said: "We believe there is a way of making considerable savings using the current assurance schemes to undertake some of the necessary on-farm work that the legislation requires."

In October of this year, the NFU lobbied MPs to grant a three-year waiver on the costs faced by many of the UK's poultry farmers under the terms of the IPPC.

Premier Foods confirms purchase of RHM

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

The UK's biggest food group is about to be created by a Â£1.2 billion deal by Premier Foods to buy RHM.

Share prices at RHM soared 31 per cent on the news that would produce a merged company with a combined annual sales total of around £2.6 billion – 93 per cent of which is in Britain, reports the Scotsman.

RHM manufactures a number of well-known products, including Hovis bread, Cadbury's cakes and Golden Shred marmalade.

The merger would bring Oxo and Bisto animal stock products under the same brand, as well as merging together two huge lines of jam and spread products.

Although Premier Foods expects to be able to reduce costs as a result of the purchase, analysts say there could be problems for the company.

As some factories will be closed and some jobs will be cut, the Transport & General Workers' Union has moved to arrange talks about their concerns.

McDonald's cooks up trans-fat substitute

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

New York's recent decision to ban the use of all trans-fats in restaurants and baked produce is forcing McDonald's to find an alternative.

Since 2003, McDonald's has maintained its commitment to the use of trans-fats in principle, but claims that finding a healthier alternative that maintain the company's familiar taste has been hard to achieve.

McDonald's currently cooks its fries in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

"We will comply with the New York Board of Health's proposal," said McDonald's in a statement.

"[Although a number of trans-fat free alternatives are currently being tested in some restaurants,] we are not yet prepared to announce a national rollout for an alternative blend," it added.

New York's trans-fat ban will be introduced in July 2007, although manufacturers of baked produce will receive an additional year to source an alternative product.

Trans-fats are manufactured from the addition of hydrogen to vegetable oil in order to prolong freshness and enhance flavour stability.

Although trans-fats can be found in a number of products, they are predominantly used in baked produce such as biscuits, cakes and bread, according to America's department of health and human services.

NFU spells out "why farming matters"

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

In an effort to bring home the importance of the contributions of its members, the National Farmers' Union (NFU) is spelling out to the public just "why farming matters".

As part of its ongoing campaign being run under the same banner, the NFU plans to highlight the quality and security of food supplies in the UK at a media dinner event in London on Monday December 11th.

To underline its point, the union quotes statistics showing seven out of ten Brits want their foods from local sources and 60 per cent of all food supplies across the country are farmed or grown in the UK.

NFU president Peter Kendall comments: "Our aim is to give everyone a much clearer idea of the current and potential contribution farming provides to the economy, to the quality and security of our food supplies."

Last week, the NFU lent its support to the government's Year of Food and Farming initiative as it was officially launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

EU fish stock limits 'not definitive'

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

Current EU proposals which would see cod fishing cut by 25 per cent and sole catching reduced by 15 per cent are not definitive, according to the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO).

The nature of the decision making process leaves room for manoeuvre before the European Commission rules on how many fish can be caught in European waters, the NFFO maintains.

A decision on stock levels is to be made in Brussels later this month and the NFFO remains confident that delegates will make the right choices, taking into account concerns over both the environment and the livelihoods of fish farmers around Europe.

Chief executive of the NFFO Barrie Deas told BBC Radio Four's Farming Today: "I think there's still a lot of movement in these figures.

"It's a proper democratic process; it looks a bit theatrical from the outside but it is the responsibility of ministers to strike balance."

The NFFO was established in 1977 to represent the fishing industry with a single voice, which is considered to be particularly important during negotiations like the ones ongoing over fish stock limits.

Organic chickens 'no healthier', researchers claim

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

Chickens raised in battery farms are no healthier and taste little different than organically farmed varieties, according to research carried out by a team of researchers from Strathclyde University.

In fact, lower levels of omega-3, the fatty acid well known for its health giving properties and antioxidants were detected in organic chickens during testing carried out recently by Strathclyde bioscientists.

However, the research did not look into antibiotic resistance or animal welfare of the birds involved, better standards of which many organic farmers suggest makes their food production processes safer.

Dr Corinne Spickett from the university told the BBC: "There are aspects that affect it [levels of antioxidants and omega-3], one is the nutrition of the chicken, but also the breed of chicken might have a significant impact on it."

In the UK, the Soil Association is the largest organisation campaigning to promote what it calls the "highest levels of organic integrity".

Iceland workers to strike

Date: Wed, 06 Dec 06

Story Text

Depot workers at frozen food firm Iceland are set to strike over pay in a series of strikes.

Staff based at the Iceland distribution depot in Enfield, north London, have planned the first strike for Friday December 8th. The depot has 115 drivers and 250 warehouse operatives who distribute frozen food goods to the supermarkets across the south-east.

A pay increase of 2.4 per cent was rejected from the contractor after the pay increase was imposed without consulting the workforce and would be the only pay increase with any further rise for efficiency, the Trade and General Workers Union (TGWU) said.

Pete Kavanagh, TGWU senior regional industrial organiser said: "Iceland sees fit to sponsor I'm a celebrity, get me out of here on TV while refusing to share its profits with the workers who make sure the products get into their stores."

The strikes could affect the distribution of Christmas goods to Iceland stores across London and the south-east.

A series of one and two-day strikes have been planned in the run up to Christmas, one of the busiest periods for the warehouse.

A 'majority' of farmers advocate CAP limits

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

A majority of farmers in the UK are in favour of the introduction of farming subsidy caps, research suggests.

According to the results of a survey of 1 600 interviewees, published by Farmers Weekly, 69 per cent of the UK's farming community favour the introduction of farming subsidy caps as a method of introducing reform to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

However, the UK government remains opposed to the idea of capping, fearing that such a policy would discriminate against highly productive farmers.

'The business getting a big support payment will be supporting more jobs and putting more back in to the local economy,' said James Withers, deputy chief executive of the National Farmers

Union Scotland.

'Capping is a lazy way of trying to reform the CAP when what we need is a discussion with government on what is wanted on farming,' he added.

Under a recent reform of CAP, payments to farmers are now covered under the Single Payment Scheme, with 11 individual payments located under one umbrella.

Compass to sell Â£500m vending business

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

Catering firm Compass is to sell off its Â£500 million vending machine business following a four per cent drop in sales in its educational sector.

Selecta, which operates in 21 countries in continental Europe and the UK, generated Â£476 million in revenue last year, Compass said in its preliminary report, but it is still to be sold off.

"The sale of Selecta and the gradual withdrawal from a number of small countries will result in a much greater focus for the remaining business," said chief executive officer, Richard Cousins.

"Vending is an important ongoing part of our offering to clients. However, our highly successful and profitable European specialist vending business, Selecta, has a different strategy, financial model and target market to the rest of the group. Selecta also derives only nine per cent of its revenues from our contract foodservice clients and as a consequence of this, we have decided to sell the Selecta business," added the firm.

Healthier eating drives at schools also hit Scholastic, Compass' canteen subsidiary, saying that take-up of healthy food options "remains slow".

News of the sale and poor educational performance follows a warning in September that the group may pull out of schools if losses were too great.

Britvic: Carbonates market 'volatile'

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

Britvic has announced that the carbonates market is volatile as it releases its preliminary results.

The soft drink firm states that its carbonates revenues were down by 4.7 per cent in the second half of the year, following a nine per cent drop in the first half, with branded revenue down 2.6 per cent overall for the year.

"In the second half of our financial year, we have achieved a marked improvement in our volume and revenue performance. We have maintained a sharp focus on ARP, cost savings and cash management against the backdrop of a difficult carbonates market and continued growth in the stills market," commented Paul Moody, chief executive of Britvic.

However, he was confident that the firm was taking advantage of the trend towards health and well-being through the launch of products focused on such demand.

Stills revenue was up 5.6 per cent in the second half of 2006, compared to a one per cent drop in

the first half, something that Britvic said was due to "a solid performance from the key categories of adult, juice drinks and squash".

Despite this increase, the firm was still not overly optimistic for the future.

"Given the volatility in the carbonates market we remain cautious on the outlook for this category," concluded Mr Moody.

New online food and drink search launched

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

Consumers could now have an easier way to find speciality food and drinks, after Yell.com launched its local search engine recently.

The company's food and drink channel presents an extensive list of Britain's independent food and drink suppliers, all of which deliver directly to their customers and is designed to take the stress out of finding unusual groceries.

Yell.com suggests that its latest offering gives food and drink manufacturers and retailers a chance to advertise their goods to online consumers around the UK.

The search engine will also feature recipe ideas from Delia Smith and journalist Rosemary Moon.

Eddie Cheng, president of Yell.com, said: "The new food and drink channel is just one of our new developments and taps into the nation's new found passion for good quality food and drink."

Yell.com operates in Latin America, the USA and around Europe, as well as in the UK.

Organic food labelling 'inadequate'

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

Labelling criteria used to distinguish organically produced foods from their conventional counterparts is inadequate, according to the director of the Elm Farm Research Centre.

Describing a particular food as organic does not say enough about how it was actually produced and often these goods are made in much the same way as those considered conventional, Lawrence Woodward has claimed.

Mr Woodward cites the example of chicken production, saying that the diets of organic birds are "virtually conventional" and the quality of chickens in Britain's supermarkets whether organic or otherwise are similar.

"The organic sector has really got to take this on board and it can't just cave in to the demands of value production and the demands of supermarkets," he told BBC Radio Four's Farming Today programme.

"It has to protect real organic producers and these real organic producers will produce quality products."

According to the Elm Farm Research Centre, organic foods, when produced and sold locally, will be fresh and of high quality.

Tesco maintains pre-Christmas growth

Date: Tue, 05 Dec 06

Story Text

Britain's biggest food retailer Tesco has revealed sales have continued to rise during the last three months ahead of the crucial festive season.

Two months ago the firm revealed it had made half-year profits of Â£1.1 billion and today the supermarket giant said like-for-like sales had risen 4.4 per cent in the 13 weeks to November 25th.

The company said in a trading statement that "strong growth" had been experienced across all its business areas, although falling petrol prices had a dampening effect on overall growth.

Excluding petrol, Tesco's like-for-like sales, which exclude new stores, were up 5.6 per cent.

A statement today said: "The group maintained strong growth during the third quarter, driven by all four parts of our strategy."

Quarterly international sales were up 17.9 per cent, with the company revealing it plans to open 300 stores outside of the UK over the next six months.

Asda and Sainsbury's rank second and third respectively - behind market leading Tesco - in the list of Britain's largest grocery retailers.

Drinks firm in Â£1m sponsorship deal

Date: Mon, 04 Dec 06

Story Text

Highland Spring has announced a Â£1 million deal for sponsorship of 15 top snooker players.

Stephen Hendry MBE, Ken Doherty and Ronnie O'Sullivan and 12 other players are to become part of Team Highland Spring.

Joe Beeston, chief executive of the Scottish mineral water brand, said: "Highland Spring has enjoyed a long standing relationship with snooker since 1998.

"This deal is a fantastic coup for the brand as we continue to expand our association with world-class sportspeople and showcase the brand to a global audience."

Seven times world champion, Stephen Hendry, added that he saw the deal as significant because "it's important [that youngsters] understand the benefits of good hydration during sport and how it helps you stay focused and perform to the best of your ability. Highland Spring is a natural brand to help communicate that message."

Logos will appear on the players' waistcoats, a mark likely to be seen by more than 200 million viewers during 300 hours of televised coverage, Highland Spring claims.

Sainsbury's shipping out food students

Date: Mon, 04 Dec 06

Story Text

In a role comparable to modern men and women from Del Monte, star of TV ads in the 1980s and 1990s, J Sainsbury's is to send science graduates on a gap year to visit food and drink suppliers to create an increase in food experts.

The Taste the World scheme will see the supermarket work with five universities to encourage graduates to become food scientists, a discipline that has seen a decrease in numbers lately.

"Encouraging graduates to become interested in food technology is crucial to the industry and ultimately the future of Britain's health," said Christine Williams, from Reading University, one of the participating institutions.

"It seems quite ironic that despite the UK becoming a nation of foodies, there has been a decrease in people wanting to become food experts. We hope this scheme whets their appetite in joining the industry. Travelling is also something that appeals to young people so this scheme will attract the best candidates which is a positive step for the food industry."

Only food or science-based degree graduates are eligible for the scheme and they must pass through the Sainsbury's graduate assessment centre and be accepted for the Sainsbury's graduate scheme as a product technologist.

A spokeswoman for the Soil Association told the Guardian that she supported this idea, adding that she hopes that other firms follow suit.

Fears raised as Europe votes on GM foods

Date: Mon, 04 Dec 06

Story Text

Friends of the Earth (FoE) has warned that the safety of potatoes throughout Europe will be jeopardised if it allows genetically modified (GM) crops to be grown, as states across the continent prepare to cast their votes on the issue.

In what is the first vote over GM foods for eight years, all European Union member states will today decide whether they are for or against the cultivating of GM potatoes.

Although the crops are not being grown for eating, FoE is concerned that BASF, the company applying to modify potatoes genetically, cannot ensure that food chains will not be contaminated.

FoE's GM campaigner Clare Oxborrow said: "If BASF gets the go-ahead to grow these GM potatoes commercially the only benefits will be to the industrial starch industry and the biotech company itself.

"These potatoes are not intended for human consumption, but the biotech industry and UK advisors admit that they could end up in the food chain."

FoE insist that it is "time to put your foot down" when it comes to ensuring the safety and quality of foods produced in Britain and the environmental group continues to lobby the government over issues surrounding GM food production.

Premier Foods hungry for RHM

Date: Mon, 04 Dec 06

Story Text

Two of the UK's biggest food companies have announced they will be combining as Premier Foods acquires rival RHM for Â£1.2 billion.

Premier, which owns popular brands such as Branston Pickle and Quorn, will have pro forma sales of Â£2.6 billion, with 93 per cent of those sales from the UK.

In the combined group, RHM shareholders will hold approximately 41 per cent of the issued share capital and existing Premier Shareholders approximately 59 per cent.

RHM own Bisto and Mr Kipling brands and for every RHM share, the shareholders will receive one new Premier share and 83.2 pence.

Robert Schofield, chief executive officer of Premier, said: "RHM is a business with strong brands and talented people. This acquisition brings Premier more great British brands with leading category positions which fit naturally in our portfolio.

Looking to the future, Mr Schofield added: "As we've done before, we intend to drive growth through innovation and investment whilst maintaining a tight control on costs. This acquisition transforms our scale and we believe it will enable us to be a better partner with our retail customers."

The acquisition will mean that the new Premier will have a large portfolio of major brands, the top ten of which will have retail sales of approximately Â£1.1 billion in aggregate.

Tesco opens green supermarket

Date: Mon, 04 Dec 06

Story Text

Tesco, the biggest food retailer in the UK, claims to have opened Britain's greenest supermarket in Wick in the north of Scotland.

The supermarket chain said on Friday its new eco-store would set the 'benchmark' for green technology and construction in retail, as well as slashing its carbon footprint in half compared to similar stores.

Builders of the 50,000 sq ft space used timber and recycled, recyclable or sustainable materials in construction

The store houses five micro wind turbines and solar cells, collects rainwater for re-use in store and deploys energy-efficient refrigeration and bakery ovens.

The construction had a carbon footprint 20 per cent smaller than a conventional store, Tesco said, through the use of ships rather than lorries to transport the timber.

Lucy Neville-Rolfe, company secretary for the retail giant, described the store as "a great step" forward for Tesco.

Dr Garry Felgate, director of delivery and external relations at the Carbon Trust, said he was delighted Tesco planned to reduce its "overall energy demand" and save carbon.

"Tesco's new store at Wick is a great example of how businesses can incorporate innovative ideas into new buildings and create stores with a low carbon footprint," Dr Felgate said.

"Cutting carbon from every angle in the business is our key priority - whether through helping to develop Tesco's renewables policy, advising on low carbon building design or developing an education programme for existing energy champions within each store nationwide."

Tesco says it aims to cut energy consumption per square foot by half by 2010 compared with 2000 levels.

Tesco is planning to invest Â£100 million in environmental technology.

Stuart Hay of Friends of the Earth Scotland said the overall operations of large stores like the one in Wick still damaged the environment.

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Mums fight back with soup

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

Two mums have fought back against junk food by launching their own organic soup range aimed at children.

The My Little Soup range of fresh, chilled organic soups is targeted towards children aged between four and 11 and first appeared in shops in September.

However, the soups have proved so popular that the company, headed by mums Marnie Millard and Rachel Allen, are planning to extend the range of flavours available in the new year, the Halifax Evening Courier reports.

Currently available in three flavours: Tomato; Carrot & Cheddar and Mild and Spicy Vegetable, the soups can be cooked in a couple of minutes in the microwave, are organic and contain no preservatives or chemicals.

Ms Millard said: "As mums ourselves we are aware of the importance of getting children to eat a balanced diet but it's not always easy when kids are fussy and we're short of time.

"We decided it had to be something we truly believed in and saw a gap in the market for a healthy soup for older children."

The soups are sold in Morrisons and Co-op stores and will be available in Asda from February.

[Click here for more information](http://www.mylittlesoupcompany.co.uk/press.html)

Orafti launches low sugar inulin

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

A new reduced sugar inulin has been launched by Orafti Active Food Ingredients.

The company is a leading name in inulin production and has launched the new product, named BeneoLGI, which contains just three per cent sugars.

This small amount of sugars means that more can be added, but still ensuring low sugar levels in the final food product.

With consumers being urged to ensure they purchase lower fat and low sugar products, this will be a welcome addition to the market.

Manufacturers producing low calorie foods will also benefit from it as it contains just 1.1 kcal/g.

"We are very excited about the launch of this innovative new product, BeneoLGI, and the opportunities it gives manufacturers to reduce sugar and fat, while providing a health, taste and texture boost to 'light' products – tasty guilt-free foods that have the Feelgood Factor," said Dominic Speelers, executive vice president of sales & marketing at Orafti Active Food Ingredients.

Click here for further information.

New super juice launched in Sainsbury's

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

A new super juice combining pomegranate and blueberry juice has been launched in supermarket Sainsbury's.

The delicious and nutritious Pomegreat 100 & blueberry is free from artificial colours, flavourings and sweeteners and is the latest in the Pomegreat range.

Cholesterol charity Heart-UK has also approved the new super juice drink.

"Pomegreat 100 & blueberry juice combines the exotic flavour of pomegranates and blueberries to create a perfectly balanced and naturally sweet taste," according to the firm.

It added: "Each carton is packed with the juice of ten pomegranates and expertly blended with succulent blueberries to create a fruit juice that is 100 per cent smooth and flavourful. It's simply delicious!"

Click here for further information

Funding to attract women to food sector

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

A new training scheme is to be offered to women working in food and drink manufacturing to help more of them progress into management positions.

Improve, the food and drink sector skills council, has been awarded Â£500,000 in public funding as part of the government's new Women and Work Programme.

The money will be used to subsidise training that will help 500 women employees achieve a management qualification within the next two years.

"Food and drink manufacturing has long been a male-dominated industry, especially at management level," said Jack Matthews, chief executive of Improve.

"Currently just 23 per cent of the sector's managers are women. This project will equip women with the skills and knowledge to take on more senior roles, helping to increase their earning potential and further their career development."

He added that increasing the number of women managers in food and drink will also help to change "outdated perceptions that have in the past deterred many women from joining the sector".

<http://www.improveltd.co.uk/web/Data/Media%20Centre/Women%20in%20work%20-%20Dec%2006.pdf> Click here for more information

Industry must think internationally says Dairy UK

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

Dairy UK has said that it is launching a new initiative to support what it says is essential international expansion in the UK dairy sector.

The industry is only beginning to wake up to the realities of globalised markets and risks being left behind as other countries begin to map out their business strategies.

"Trade liberalisation, Cap reform, the WTO, globalisation, and the enlargement of the EU, are all having a major impact on the dairy market place," said Jim Begg of Dairy UK.

These developments are changing the way that companies do business and are creating new opportunities. The outlook for world demand is positive, so we must 'fish where the fish are', he told Stackyard.

Alongside Food from Britain, Dairy UK will be running a series of dairy sector events alongside the Food from Britain Export Awards and Network Forum in London.

Tiny tangerines hit the shelves for Christmas

Date: Fri, 15 Dec 06

Story Text

Marks and Spencer is hoping to use Christmas tradition as a natural marketing boost for its new

fruit variety.

Tiny tangerines little bigger than cherry tomatoes have been developed by Chinese growers and Marks & Spencer hopes they will be a big hit this Christmas.

Though not themselves new "being among the oldest variety of tangerine" Marks and Spencer hopes they will be seen as an innovative product on the UK market and prove popular for their lack of pips, sweet taste and easy to peel skin.

Richard Brown, a fruit specialist at M&S, told the Telegraph: "Tiny tangerines have a delicious sweet taste, are easy to peel and their size makes them really stand out.

"Children love mini-versions of fruit so the tiny tangerine will be the perfect stocking filler. More people are looking for something different and novelty fruit is more popular than ever."

The tangerines, grown in the Jiangxi region and have been grown for at least 1,300 years

The Dannon Company wins processor of the year

Date: Thu, 14 Dec 06

Story Text

New York-based food firm The Dannon Company has been named this year's processor of the year by Dairy Foods, it has been reported.

The subsidiary of well-known dairy group Danone is one of two yoghurt groups to have picked up the accolade, Food Business Review Online reports.

Dannon beat off competition from five others in to take the top spot in the category.

The other yoghurt firm to have won was Stonyfield Farm in 2003, which also won thanks to the significant achievements it has made in the past 12 months.

"While the US dairy industry is rightfully excited about the recent history of innovation and sales growth in the yoghurt category, Dannon is ready to push that innovation and US yoghurt consumption to an even higher level," said David Phillips, chief editor of Dairy Foods.

CEO of the company Juan Carlos Dalto said the Dannon was "honoured" to be given the top accolade by its peers in the US dairy industry.

[For further information, click here](http://www.food-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=63DBD2A7-5D7E-41E3-A32F-43D9D7BC5C90).

Waitrose extends Fairtrade range

Date: Thu, 14 Dec 06

Story Text

Waitrose has announced that it has extended its range of Fairtrade products as part of its commitment to ethical trading.

The supermarket has added two new organic coffees and three organic chocolate bars to its Fairtrade range which now includes over 100 products, such as fruit, tea, biscuits and wines.

Two new coffees, Waitrose Fairtrade Organic Sumatra Mandheling Roast & Ground Coffee and Waitrose Fairtrade Organic Peruvian Decaffeinated Roast & Ground Coffee, have been launched, both available in 227g packs.

The Sumatra coffee is 100 per cent Arabica and grown in Takengon in north-western Sumatra, while the Peruvian coffee, also 100 per cent Arabica, is grown by a cooperative of small holders in the tropical valleys of the Andes.

The Waitrose Fairtrade Organic Chocolate is available in Swiss Milk Chocolate with Hazelnuts, Swiss Milk Chocolate or Dark Chocolate (70 per cent cocoa solids) varieties and costs Â£1.39 for 100g.

Waitrose said that the new products would enable consumers to enjoy their coffee break with a conscience.

It revealed that it is looking to add more Fairtrade products to its range and will also be holding selected promotions on Fairtrade products during Fairtrade Fortnight, between February 26th and March 11th 2007.

[Click here for more information](http://www.waitrose.com/food_drink/foodexpertise/fairtrade/index.asp)

FSA pledges to cut Â£195m red tape

Date: Thu, 14 Dec 06

Story Text

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has pledged to cut the burden of food sector regulation by Â£195 million a year.

The promise is contained in the agency's Simplification Plan, targeting ways to cut the cost of regulation and enforcement while maintaining high standards of protection.

"We are firmly committed to better regulation," said FSA head Dame Deirdre Hutton. "Simplifying regulation makes compliance easier and leads to better public protection."

Much of the savings will be due to reform of cattle testing for BSE, easing the burden on farmers and transferring more cattle from compensation schemes to the market.

Other savings will come from deregulating butchers' licensing and the launch of Grail, a new database allowing port authorities to quickly find the relevant laws of food imports.

"Simplification is a three-pronged strategy touching on all stakeholders: businesses, consumers and local authorities," said head of better regulation at the FSA Phillip Clarke.

"Fully implemented it will make a lasting difference, benefiting all."

[Click here for more information](http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/betregs/draftsimp)

Nonwovens specialist invests in new spunmelt line

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 06

Story Text

Finnish firm Ahlstrom is to invest £27 million in a new food production nonwovens line at its plant in Chirnside, Scotland.

The new line will be used to serve the infusion products market with next-generation spunmelt products, a market which is expected to grow at five per cent annually, Ahlstrom said.

The firm said that there was a clear market demand for new spunmelt materials and that its leading customers had indicated growing interest in new solutions and environmentally friendly products

A differentiation in the type of filter media used was demanded by the growth in high value-added segments, which was higher than in traditional tea markets, it added.

"The investment opens up new market opportunities for Ahlstrom," said president and CEO of the firm, Jukka Moisio.

"The UK and continental Europe still remain the leading tea bag consumers, but demand in emerging markets, such as Russia, India and China is growing fast. Organic investments in fast growing product segments are an essential part of our global growth strategy."

 Click here for more information

Pork scratchings to become more appealing?

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 06

Story Text

A food company has taken on the challenge of making pork scratchings more appealing.

Bolton's Red Mill Snack Foods, which has been in the business for more than three decades, produces over half a billion bags of the popular pub snacks each year, website This Is Lancashire reports.

After 30 years of supplying pork scratchings, the creators now want the snack to appeal to a younger, trendier audience.

Nick Ripley, commercial director of the company, commented: "The project involved redesigning all our packaging, both in terms of appearance and functionality in that everything is now foil-packed for freshness."

The product range now includes larger Prime Cut scratchings and Bacon Bites and the company has even adopted a new marketing campaign to woo would-be pork scratchings eaters.

Sarah Nunn, Red Mill's marketing manager, told the website: "We introduced a new slogan great taste, no porkies, which neatly sums up the product offering, and added some humour to our bags and point of sale material."

[_make_pork_scratching_sales_sizzle.php">Click here for further information.](#)

Celebrity chef offers downloadable video recipes

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 06

Story Text

A celebrity chef has announced a scheme aimed at providing fans and budding chefs with the opportunity to follow his recipes via the internet.

Andrew Nutter, the Manchester chef famous for his cuisine at London's Savoy Hotel and the Nutters restaurant, has starred on Ready Steady Cook and own show Utter Nutter and now plans to introduce his new venture online.

The innovative scheme sees web users watch then download videos of the chef making some of his famous dishes, including crispy black pudding wontons.

The project has even attracted interest from abroad, with Los Angeles website executives inviting Mr Nutter to an America in an attempt to secure his business.

"It's really original, as you can download your shopping list on your MP3 player, for example, then cook it step-by-step using the film. So far, we have done about 15 films and three are on the internet," Mr Nutter revealed, speaking to the Manchester Evening News.

For further information click here

Wrap announces innovative packaging funding

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 06

Story Text

The Waste & Resources Action Programme (Wrap) has announced financial assistance for companies who are working on packaging optimisation projects.

The funding will provide a vital boost for companies at all levels of the retail supply chain, including retailers, designers, manufacturers, brand owners and research institutes, and is particularly aimed at food and drink producers.

Wrap has revealed that it is keen to attract interest from those working on beverages in cans or cartons, frozen and chilled ready meals, pet foods, jams, preserves, pastes, condiments and sauces, as well as raw, cooked and processed meats and fresh produce.

Project manager Claire Hingston said that the financial support was designed to help develop vital knowledge and expertise which would improve resource efficiency and help to reduce household waste, 50 per cent of which originates from the UK's top five supermarkets.

"This latest round of funding is available to support a wide range of activities, from concept development, design and laboratory testing to consumer research, prototyping and piloting," Ms Hingston revealed.

"Ultimately, the idea must have a clear route to market and have potential to significantly reduce

UK household packaging waste."

Applicants need to show that they are taking an innovative approach to reducing packaging waste, such as the development of reusable, refillable or returnable packaging or ideas to reduce packaging waste through internet shopping.

[Further information](http://www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/news/new_funding.html)

Experts advise adding folic acid to flour

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

Adding folic acid to flour could significantly lower the risk of spina bifida and other birth defects, a leading nutritional information group has suggested.

The Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition has said that it will campaign for mandatory fortification in the near future, ahead of a Food Standards Agency recommendation to government ministers, due to take place in May of next year.

Prior to that meeting a public consultation will take place, investigating consumer attitudes to any potential change.

Experts say that public awareness of the benefits of folic acid could be improved, with only half of pregnant women currently taking folic acid supplements, despite advice suggesting that it helps prevent defects in neural tubes.

Folic acid has been added to flour in the US and Canada since 1998, and was first recommended for UK flour in 2000. At the time the government said that it wanted further evidence.

Other experts have suggested that adding the acid to flour could mask vitamin B deficiencies in older consumers.

[For further information click here](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6171501.stm)

Masterfoods unveils new Galaxy Thick Shake design

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

Masterfoods has unveiled the packaging for its new Galaxy Thick Shake, following the recent announcement that it is extending both its Galaxy and Mars lines.

The new milk shake drink to be launched under the Galaxy brand contains less than four per cent fat and should therefore appeal to consumers who are concerned about healthy eating and want to limit their intake of fat.

Galaxy Thick Shake's packaging has been designed by Vibrandt, which has created a premium design in line with the other drinks in the range.

Just as the recently-launched Mars Thick Shake features a large red 'M' on a black bottle, the new Galaxy product bears the letter 'G' on a cream and brown background, to tie in with the rest of the Galaxy line.

According to Brand Republic, the confectionery giant has spent £15 million on a marketing campaign for the Galaxy brand this year.

[Further information](http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/design/article/609377/galaxy-set-roll-thick-shake-vibrant)

Xyience launches energy drink

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

A new energy drink has been launched by Xyience, the company has announced.

Xenergy is a sugar-free energy drink, which is fortified with vitamins and contains no calories.

It is claimed that the drink will offer a great taste experience for athletes without the usual crash that energy drink consumers get.

According to Xyience, this is because of the inclusion of glucoronolactone alongside the caffeine.

"We felt that, although there are hundreds of energy drinks on the market, all of them were lacking when it came to taste and nutrition," said Ted Joiner, president of Xyience.

"We wanted to give the consumer great taste, a variety of flavours and an ultra premium product not currently available in this category."

[Click here for further information](http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=12858&fSite=AO545&next=3)

Sainsbury's turns to Fairtrade only bananas

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

Sainsbury's has pledged to sell only Fairtrade bananas, which would double the volume of Fairtrade bananas bought in Britain.

The supermarket chain sells 1,000 bananas every minute and 2,000 tonnes or about ten million individual bananas a week.

"This move to 100 per cent Fairtrade leads the world and really sets the standard for global Fairtrade sourcing," said Justin King, the chief executive of Sainsbury's.

"We will continue to give our customers great choice at the same price, but from now on every customer will know that buying bananas from Sainsbury's is helping make a difference to a developing country."

The Fairtrade Foundation has heralded the move as "the biggest ever commitment to date by a single company anywhere in the world".

Deputy director Ian Bretman said it would "extend the unique benefits of the Fairtrade guarantee to thousands more farmers and workers in Central and South America and the Caribbean".

Producer organisations will be paid for the full cost of production and \$1 per box of bananas for investment.

The supermarket also strengthened its long-term ties with Fairtrade businesses in the Windward Islands and the Dominican Republic.

Prime minister of banana-producing island Saint Lucia Kenny D Anthony welcomed the announcement.

"In this era of competitive global trade, small-scale farmers like ours have little or no chance of survival without the kind of market intervention that is provided through fairtrade," he said.

Coldwater heats up frozen sector with new ready meals

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

Grimsby-based Coldwater Seafoods is hoping to generate an extra £20 million a year with the launch of its new range of ready meals.

The seafood specialist has created 20 new frozen ready meals which will go on sale in a number of supermarkets, including the Finest range of premium meals at Tesco.

In a bid to boost its growth strategy, the company has confirmed that it hopes to become Britain's leading seafood ready meal producer, according to the Fishupdate website.

The firm's parent company, Icelandic Group, first came to the UK in 1955 and formed Coldwater Seafood in 1996 to produce value added frozen seafood products.

According to the Fishupdate website, the company is in the process of restructuring its operations in the UK and the rest of Europe and the Grimsby plant will focus on chilled and frozen ready meals.

[Click here for further information](http://www.icelandic.is/index.aspx?GroupId=150)

Salty Dog to launch premium crisps range

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 06

Story Text

Family-run snack company Salty Dog is preparing to launch a new premium range of crisps early next year.

The Darling Spuds range of crisps will be a "more cultured younger sister" to its existing Salty Dog snacks, the firm said.

The new range will be available in four new flavours: Leek & Pink Peppercorn; Fire Roasted Jalapeno Peppers & West Country Cheddar; Crushed Sea Salt and Sea Salt & Modena Balsamic Vinegar, the Publican reports.

Co-founder of Salty Dog David Willis said: "Whilst we are happy to acknowledge that we are not the only lovingly made, all natural, hand-cooked crisp in the marketplace, we do believe that unlike some other well-bred potato pals, our well-grounded crisps will never be allowed to take themselves too seriously."

Based in Buckinghamshire, the firm produces hand-cooked crisps and peanuts in a variety of flavours for Chiltern Snacks.

The main crisps brand, Salty Dog, is described as "a bit rough around the edges" and cooked to give a very crunchy texture.

Available in 35g, 50g and 150g packs, the Salty Dog crisps are available in flavours including Black Pepper & Ginger and Jalapeno & Coriander.

[Click here for more information](http://www.thepublican.com/story.asp?sectioncode=7&storycode=53681&c=1)

Top chefs reveal 'new cookery' agenda

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

Some of the food industry's top chefs have revealed details of a manifesto useful "to all people with an interest in food", which highlights the importance of innovation.

Heston Blumenthal, Thomas Keller, Harold McGee and Ferran Adria outlined their position in an article in the Observer, in which they announced their intention to support innovation in their cuisine.

"We embrace innovation - new ingredients, techniques, appliances, information, and ideas - whenever it can make a real contribution to our cooking," the manifesto states.

"We do not pursue novelty for its own sake," the chefs point out, but note that "the disciplines of food chemistry and food technology are valuable sources of information and ideas for all cooks".

Mr Blumenthal in particular has long been a staunch supporter of the application of science and innovation in his cookery, having set up his own research and development centre in 2004.

[For further information click here](http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1968665,00.html)

New enzyme replaces monoglycerides in baking

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

AB Enzymes has launched a new addition to its range of Veron enzymes.

Veron GMS, which stands for glycerol-mono-stearate, allows food processors to entirely replace monoglycerides in yeast-raised baking products.

Dr Gerald Jungschaffer, business unit manager for baking enzymes at AB Enzymes, said that the Germany-based biotech firm aims to develop technical and quality improvements for processes and products, as well as providing customers with an economical advantage.

"By implementing Veron GMS in their system, our customers can now save up to 30 per cent of their current monoglyceride costs," he revealed.

"That type of enhanced efficiency is an excellent example why AB Enzymes has a leading market position and outstanding reputation in baking enzymes."

The firm has now filed a patent application for the technology, which has been described as a novel breakthrough in enzymatic bio-emulsifying.

It is effective regardless of the type of monoglyceride traditionally used and, according to sales development manager Oscar Diez, is a natural product and therefore does not require labelling as an additive.

Further information

New packaging unveiled by Harviestoun Brewery

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

A new packaging design is to be rolled out across Harviestoun Brewery's range of beers, it has been announced.

The range includes Bitter & Twisted, Schiehallion and Old Engine, whose new packaging will tell the story of the brewery and detail the history of the beer.

Drinkers will also get the chance to get behind the thinking of why Ken Brooker named the beers as he did.

"Every beer that is brewed here has a story to tell and we want people to know the stories, whether it's the inspiration behind the beers or the ingredients," said Chris Marsh, head of marketing at the brewery.

Click here for further information

Whisky Cava drink ready for launch

Date: Mon, 11 Dec 06

Story Text

An innovative new drink combining Scottish bramble whisky liqueur and Spanish Cava is ready to hit the market.

The drink, named Chambles, was created by East Linton-based firm Scots Cheer, which already produces a range of products, including damson gin, raspberry vodka and the bramble whisky liqueur Bramble.

Owners of the firm Robin Ford and Derry Campbell came up with the idea of blending their liqueur with sparkling wine when they were trying to create a new drink for a Christmas party, reports the Berwickshire Times.

The pair wanted something that would appeal to both younger and older guests and described the results as "a great success".

To produce the new drink, the liqueur is sent from Scotland to the vineyard of one of Spain's best-known Cava producers and blended by winemaker Josep Vardi, bottled and sent back.

"As soon as I mixed up [some of] our Cava with the Bramble, actually in my own kitchen, I thought we were on to a winner," said Signor Vardi.

"The dryness of the Cava is maintained and blends well with the intriguing mix of blackberries and whisky."

 Click here for more information