



# foodsense

M O N T H L Y N E W S & V I E W S

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## New Recipe - Beef Bolognaise with Pasta

In direct response to customer feedback we will be amending the recipe to our Beef Bolognaise with Pasta Shells with effect from 27th May 2009. The name will change as we drop the word "shells" to reflect the fact that we are now using Penne pasta in the recipe.

It was felt that the change of pasta reflected a more contemporary approach to the dish. You will be delighted to know that the nutritional profile of the dish has also improved, delivering more protein whilst maintaining the existing dietary codes and allergen status to ensure that the improvement does not impact on the coding of your existing menu.

Please be sure to let your food service staff know of the change so that they can advise clients when making their menu choice. **Thank you.**



## Tillery Valley Foods and Wormtech

Tillery Valley has been working in conjunction with Wormtech™ since January 2009 in order to focus on the key environmental benefits of increasing the amount of waste materials that are recycled and to reduce the amount of waste that is disposed of to landfill.

Wormtech, established in 2003, is at the forefront of recycling in South Wales and have developed an in-vessel system to carry out large-scale composting of green and food waste in an efficient, cost-effective and sustainable way. The entire operation is carried out inside converted ex-military buildings which are located on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Caerwent Monmouthshire.

In addition to biodegradable food and green waste, Wormtech also take all types of dry recyclates such as cardboard, paper, plastics, metal, textiles etc. These materials are sorted and baled and then supplied to manufacturers for reprocessing.

In January 2009, Tillery Valley started sending segregated food waste to Wormtech for composting and since then we have extended the contract to recycle all the following waste streams: cardboard, paper, some aluminium trays and cans, steel food tins, wooden pallets and plastic trays and we are now looking at ways of segregating other types of material such as shrink wrap. We have even started recycling old Wellington boots!

We are very pleased with the progress towards minimising the amount of waste that is sent to landfill.

This is an integral part of our continuous environmental improvement programme.



## THE BEST LAID PLANS!

We are pleased to announce that Richard Hill has joined the operations team here at Abertillery as our new Planning Manager.

Richard brings with him a wealth of experience in production planning, processes and customer focus having worked for Tulip (UK) Ltd at their M&S dedicated site on the Wirral, near Liverpool for 14 years. He also has the added bonus of a good knowledge of TVF having previously spent time on site as an Interim Manager.



He will work closely with our sales order processing, production and internal logistics team in delivering improvements in stock holding and manufacturing efficiencies, ensuring that we maintain and improve on our delivery performance to meet the needs of our clients.

Richard lives in Chester, whilst his daughters are completing their GCSE's and 'A' levels, and so in the meantime he commutes to South Wales on a weekly basis.

When the opportunity arises and time permits, Richard enjoys a round of golf.

# Food Labelling is a Big News Story this Month

On May 6th came the FSA announcement welcoming the much anticipated final report on front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition signpost labelling, published by an independent group of experts, the Project Management Panel. The FSA said it will now 'take forward the findings, which show that shoppers would benefit from a single FOP scheme that includes the words 'high, medium and low', traffic light colours and percentage of Guideline Daily Amount (GDA)."

## Traffic-light food labelling

### A position statement

- The front-of-pack 'traffic light' scheme is best for consumers.
- The government should push hard for it to be universally adopted.
- Strong representations should be made to the European authorities to support the scheme.

### Implications for public health

Almost two thirds of adults and a third of children are either overweight or obese, and it is estimated that without clear action these figures will rise to almost nine in ten adults and two-thirds of children by 2020.

Dietary surveys indicate that average intake of total fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt among the UK population clearly exceed recommended intakes, and that some population groups are eating more than twice the amounts recommended for a healthy diet.

Clear nutrition signposting on the front of food packaging is an important tool to help people make healthier food choices. It is estimated that most shoppers spend just four to ten seconds choosing each product. Repeated consumer surveys show that people want a simple, trusted system of nutritional labelling that uses a consistent approach, wherever they shop, whatever the brand.

The cross-government strategy to tackle obesity in England, points to the responsibility of the food industry to provide consumers with clear and consistent information about the food and drink they consume, and supports the adoption of 'traffic-light' nutritional labelling by retailers and manufacturers.

### Traffic-light nutritional signposting and how it is used

Traffic-light labels use red, amber and green signals to show consumers, at-a-glance, whether a product is high, medium or low in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt (see Fig 1). To help them make healthier food choices by choosing more products with green or amber lights than red, traffic-light labels are based on icons proposed developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and are used by a variety of manufacturers and retailers on a wide range of brands and products. The criteria that underpin the labels are based on the dietary recommendations of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition (COMA) and its successor, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN).

The traffic-light labels also enable quick comparisons between similar products. The system is particularly useful on prepared and processed foods such as sandwiches, ready meals, breakfast cereals and processed meat products which often contain unexpectedly high levels of saturated fat, sugars and salt. The UK has the largest market in Europe for ready meals with sales at almost £3 billion in 2008.

Food retailers report that traffic-light labels also promote healthy reformulation by manufacturers. Food companies are using the colour coding as an incentive to reduce fat, sugar and salt levels in their products, wherever possible, to achieve a more healthy profile.

### PRODUCED BY:



Fig 1. Examples of traffic-light nutritional labelling

Just prior to this announcement, our dietician attended a recent Parliamentary Food and Health Forum, where British Dietetic Association Chairman, Pauline Douglas, and GDA Campaign Director and Consultant to the Food and Drink Federation, Dr Jane Holdsworth, were invited to give their views on the perceived benefits of these two systems, both of which are underpinned by COMA (1991) and SACN (2002) recommendations.

Pauline spoke about the role of the dietician in helping consumers to understand and benefit from nutrition information. Labelling should support shoppers to easily make relevant healthy food choices for themselves and their families. She touched on practical issues that hinder people from using product information to that end - such as shopping with small children, or leaving your glasses behind! Through a consumer-based approach, she discussed the strengths and weaknesses of different systems.

Dr Holdsworth described how the %GDA scheme condensed and made sense of complex back of pack nutritional information per portion, in a way that was understandable to people from all walks of life, i.e. it improved consumers' 'food literacy'. She gave some interesting illustrations of where ambiguities in the Traffic Light system could lead to misinformation. However, it must be remembered that the Traffic Light system is designed for composite foods.



## Nutritional Know How: Healthier Food Mark

At the end of April, the Department of Health (DH) held a Healthier Food Mark (HFM) Conference at Aston Villa FC for a variety of stakeholders in this new public sector initiative. Tillery Valley Foods delegates, Anne Donelan and Chris Woodbridge were there, although as Technical Director Chris was a little distracted by the swine flu outbreak. Les Darlington is also a TVF stakeholder.

The event was opened by Geoff Dessent, DH Deputy Director of Health and Wellbeing, who, along with other speakers from Defra and the FSA, explained the wider policy context and cross-government 'fit' of the HFM, which is only one of several food procurement initiatives. They explained the consultation and pilot process, and gave an overview of the steps leading up to the launch of the HFM, planned for December 2010. This meeting was a first stage in the active consultation process and all stakeholders will be kept 'in the loop' and advised of developments. Deloitte have been engaged as Programme Directors for the DH.

After a 'burning issues' session, delegates spent the rest of the day considering the tabled draft. Participants were allocated to mixed round table groups, and asked to consider the HFM from several perspectives: accreditation, pilots and evaluation, cost savings and alignments with other policies. This event initiated the whole consultation process of 'co-production' of HFM with stakeholders from the outset.

The HFM is currently set at three levels of attainment which is a combination of established nutritional parameters, and Government strategy regarding sustainability. This provides an excellent vehicle for joining up the work of several Government departments. However, from a dietetic perspective it could infer a positive link between nutritional quality and sustainability. Some dietitians were also concerned that, whilst HFM is fitting for staff and visitors, hospital patients' and many long term care residents' menus should be exempt. Although a presenter said that people with special health or dietary needs should be exempt from HFM, during table discussions it appeared that HFM should be applicable for c.75% hospital patients. In the light of the compelling evidence about malnutrition, BDA Food Counts members who attended will be giving some feedback to the DH of their concerns about this, to be added to the large amount of comment collected by the facilitators and on 'post-it note' boards.

Following a final Q&A session, Geoff Dessent said that the conference report, revised draft HFM nutrition and sustainability criteria and pilot site information will be available this summer on [www.hfm.gov.uk](http://www.hfm.gov.uk) DH are looking for between 10 and 15 HFM public sector volunteer pilot sites, which will be independently evaluated - so if you are interested, sign up! The ethos is on small changes in catering practice that have a big overall impact to improve consumer purchasing.

Speakers and delegates (including representatives from Netmums, Which, Heinz, and national retailers) agreed on several issues:

- Defining portion size is critical for enabling the consumer to make informed choices within their daily life, whereas per 100g figures allow comparison of different products
- Calories are a well-understood 'universal currency' when it comes to the intricacies of nutrition labelling and their inclusion could align to other government initiatives on healthier food choices
- Food labelling is a tool that improves the whole country's 'food literacy' and thus reduces health inequalities in terms of education and income - hence it requires a 'lowest common denominator' approach
- We must universally adopt a single system FOP labelling system which is crystal clear, unambiguous, easy to read and understand, authoritative and Government-backed - whether it be a new, existing or hybrid system
- UK are leading the way in food labelling terms within EU member states and provide consumers with clearer information about their foods' content than ever before
- Adoption of an EU nutrient profiling system as part of the EU's Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation, aims to determine which food products will be able to bear nutrition and/or health claims. The Regulation was required to be adopted in January this year, but this being a highly complex issue, due to a lack of consensus the system has not yet been adopted and a date in 2010 is now more likely
- The EU Parliament is the final arbitrator on food labeling and - political processes being what they are - this may be some long way off, having been further held up by the June European Parliament elections.

The meeting closed with Dr Jenny Lisle, from the Royal College of Physicians, highlighting that health organisations universally supported the Traffic Light system, and introducing their collaborative Faculty of Public Health position statement on Traffic Light food labelling [www.fph.org.uk](http://www.fph.org.uk) Dr Lisle said that with our real crisis in terms of the obesity epidemic, and the increasing incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, it is important that we have a united front to urgently address the issue of nutrition labelling.

If you want any further links or the slide presentations for either event, please email Anne Donelan, our Dietetic Services Manager [anne.donelan@tvf-online.co.uk](mailto:anne.donelan@tvf-online.co.uk)

Email addresses change frequently - If you change your email address please be sure to advise our Customer Services Manager Michelle Brown: [michelle.brown@tvf-online.co.uk](mailto:michelle.brown@tvf-online.co.uk)

Tillery Valley Foods Limited, Cwmtillery Industrial Estate, Abertillery, Gwent NP13 1LZ  
Telephone: 01495 211555 Fax: 01495 213839 [www.tvf-online.co.uk](http://www.tvf-online.co.uk)

