

Food watchdog declares war on dietary nasties

By Elizabeth Rigby, Consumer Industry Editor

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Britons are set to munch their way through the equivalent of half-a-billion Cadbury creme eggs this bank holiday weekend if last year's chocolate consumption is anything to go by.

The nation snapped up £240m worth of chocolate - more than one-10th of the annual total - in the week before Easter 2009, according to Kantar Worldpanel, the industry research body.

But as Britons indulge in Easter eggs and other sugary and fatty treats, the government is increasingly concerned about long-term health problems associated with over-eating. In a bid to tackle rising obesity and ill-health caused by poor diet, which costs the NHS £7bn a year, the Food Standards Agency has now issued a mandate for change.

Food manufacturers are being told to reduce saturated fats in biscuits, cakes and chocolate and to make smaller pack sizes of indulgent foods, such as cans of sugary cola and chocolate, more widely available.

It is the second assault on the food industry in recent years. The FSA has already run a salt reduction campaign, viewed by campaigners as a success after salt intake dropped by 10 per cent nationwide in 2008 - only two years after the campaign was launched.

Now, Tim Smith, chief executive of the FSA, has other dietary nasties in his sights. Saturated fats are dangerous because they raise "bad" cholesterol and can block the arteries to the heart and increase the chance of developing heart disease, while too much sugar can lead to weight gain and tooth decay.

In setting targets for a 10 per cent reduction of saturated fat levels in filled chocolate bars, biscuits and plain cakes - he does not set out a specific timeframe - Mr Smith acknowledges he is throwing down the gauntlet to the industry.

"Salt came first and the reduction in salt is easier because you can do it by stealth," he says. "You can also retrain taste buds to accept less salt. But saturated fats are much harder to do."

Sue Davies - chief policy adviser at Which?, the consumer group - says the difficulty with saturated fats is that they cannot be reduced gradually, but instead involve a complete reformulation - which can affect the taste of the product. But PepsiCo UK and Mars, who between them provide the nation with a trio of unhealthy treats - Walkers crisps, the Mars bar and cans of Pepsi cola - have already made strides toward saturated fat reductions by their products.

In January, Mars said that after five years of effort, €10m of investment and 40,000 hours of manpower it had managed to reduce saturated fat by 15 per cent in its Mars, Snickers, Milky Way, Topic and Flyte bars - although the Mars bar still has 258 calories. PepsiCo, meanwhile, has reduced saturated fat in Walkers crisps by 70-80 per cent.

"PepsiCo have done a U-turn trying to make themselves into a healthy company," says Professor Graham MacGregor, who chairs Cash, the salt action group. "These companies

don't want to be blackballed and highlighted and shamed, so they do need to do something. The food industry has realised that [it] can't get away with bad publicity and it has to act in the interests of consumers."

But if reformulation can only go some way, consumers are also going to have to begin to eat smaller portions of what they really like, whether Easter eggs or bags of crisps. Small inroads have been made: Nestlé has offered smaller bars of Breakaway and Blue Riband biscuit bars.

"Portion size is . . . as important as reformulation," says Mr Smith. He acknowledges that to win consumers over will be much harder than it was for salt reduction. The industry cannot hit the targets alone: consumers must accept a little less chocolate at this time of the year.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2cc812e8-3eb9-11df-a706-00144feabdc0.html>

Telegraph.co.uk

FSA announces salt reduction progress

British Baker - 26.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published commitments from a number of bakery manufacturers highlighting the progress they've made with **salt** reduction. ...

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[Cloves take over as the new superfood](#) National

Sell fizzy pop in smaller cans: Food Standards Agency

Telegraph.co.uk - 27.03.2010

Fizzy drinks should be sold in smaller cans and bottles and fat in confectionary should be cut to combat Britain's obesity crisis, the Food Standards Agency ...



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Telegraph.co.uk - 27.03.2010

Millions of tonnes of food are being thrown away every year because people do not understand 'best before dates', consumer watchdogs have warned. ...



Mini portion plea for food makers

BBC News - 26.03.2010

Food manufacturers are being asked to start making smaller versions of unhealthy snacks to help the public stick to a healthier diet. ...

Mini portion plea for food makers

Food manufacturers are being asked to start making smaller versions of unhealthy snacks to help the public stick to a healthier diet.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) also wants food producers to cut saturated fat in their biscuits, cakes, and chocolates.

It insisted that the recommendations were not about telling people what to eat, just offering them more choice.

The agency has no powers to force manufacturers to change their products.

One of the more striking requests is for a smaller soft drink can to be offered alongside the standard 330ml version.

An FSA spokesman said that snacks and soft drinks were the biggest contributors to calories and saturated fats in the average diet, and that manufacturers were being asked to tackle their biggest-selling products first to maximise the impact of any changes.



Shopping for healthy food can be difficult

“ This isn't about telling people what to eat - we want to make it easier for people to make healthier choices ”

Dr Clair Baynton, FSA

It wants saturated fat in chocolate bars with fillings, and in plain, sweet and savoury biscuits and cakes cut by a tenth.

FSA head of nutrition Dr Clair Baynton said: "Food businesses regularly review their ingredients and processes, as well as portion sizes, and the aim of these recommendations is to encourage them to consider how they can play a part in improving public health by reducing saturated fat intakes.

"This isn't about telling people what to eat - we want to make it easier for people to make healthier choices - to choose food with reduced saturated fat and sugar - or smaller portion sizes."

Easy option

The recommendations were backed by the British Heart Foundation.

A spokesman said: "It's easy to tuck into treats such as biscuits, cakes and sugary drinks without realising just how packed full of calories, fats, salts and sugars they are.

"Reducing portion sizes and the amount of saturated fat in foods will help to improve the

nation's diet and help tackle obesity and heart disease."

A spokesman for the Food and Drink Federation - which represents manufacturers - said that its members were "rightly proud" of the work they had already done to cut calories and fat.

"Our members have been rising to this particular challenge for a number of years - and are now leading the world when it comes to developing new products and refreshing old favourites."

[Healthier sweet foods urged in battle against obesity epidemic](#)

The Guardian - 26.03.2010

Creme Eggs on the production line at Cadbury, now part of Kraft, in Birmingham. Cadbury's products are among those that the Food Standards Agency says ...

[Agency calls for 'minisized' food](#)

The Press Association - 26.03.2010

Manufacturers should start making fatty food and soft drinks in single portions to help consumers choose a healthier diet, according to recommendations. ...

[Sweet snack and fizzy drink makers told to downsize portions](#)

OnMedica - 29.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency is calling on food manufacturers to reduce the portion sizes of biscuits, cakes, buns, chocolate confectionery and soft drinks. ...

[FSA recommends that food manufacturers reduce saturated fat](#)

Eat Out Magazine - 29.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has recommended that food manufacturers reduce saturated fat in foods such as biscuits, cakes, buns, chocolates and added ...

[UK FSA sets guidelines for saturated fat and sugar](#)

Australian Food - 28.03.2010

Following a public consultation in the summer of 2009, the Food Standards Agency has today recommended that food manufacturers reduce saturated fat in foods ...

[Cloves take over as the new superfood](#)

National - 28.03.2010

Put down the pomegranate and shove aside your goji berries, for we have a new superfood in town. According to a group of Spanish researchers, ...



[FSA Urges Food Manufactures to Promote Healthy Food](#)

TopNews United Kingdom (blog) - 28.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is recommending the food manufactures to initiate facility of producing a compacter edition of food stuff that is unhealthy, ...

['Mini-size me' appeal to food manufacturers](#)

Herald.ie - 27.03.2010

By Josie Clarke Manufacturers should offer fatty food and soft drinks in smaller portions to help consumers choose a healthier diet. ...



[Food Manufacturers Asked to Make Smaller Version for Unhealthy Foods](#)

TopNews United States - 27.03.2010

So that people could stick to a healthy diet, The Food Standard Agency has asked the food manufacturers to make smaller versions of unhealthy snacks. ...

[UK Urges Healthier Junk Food to Battle Obesity](#)

NowPublic - 26.03.2010

by Jordan Yerman | March 26, 2010 at 11:42 am British government food experts at the Food Standards Agency want UK junk-food manufacturers to make their ...

[just the facts - FSA sugar targets](#)

just-drinks.com (subscription) - 26.03.2010

The UK Food Standards Agency has called for action on added sugar in soft drinks. Here, just-drinks summarises the main points. ...

[UK: FSA ups pressure on sugar in soft drinks](#)

just-drinks.com (subscription) - 26.03.2010

The UK Government's food watchdog has called on soft drinks producers to reduce their use of added sugar and offer smaller pack sizes for full sugar drinks. ...

[Food industry urged to make cuts in saturated fats and added sugar in leading ...](#)

Talking Retail - 26.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has today made its recommendations to food manufacturers on reductions in saturated fat and added sugar, as well as greater ...

[**FSA announces salt reduction progress**](#)

British Baker - 26.03.2010

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published commitments from a number of bakery manufacturers highlighting the progress they've made with salt reduction. ...

[**FBD: Further pressure on industry to cut sat fat and sugar content \(UK\)**](#)

FoodBizDaily.com (press release) - 29.03.2010

by Sarah Hills FoodBizDaily.com London March 29 2010 - The Food Standards Agency has outlined targets for the reduction of saturated fat in foods such as ...

[**UK: FSA sets out sat fat, added sugar guidelines**](#)

just-food.com (subscription) - 26.03.2010

Chocolate makers selling products in the UK will have to cut the saturated fat in their filled bars by 10% by the end of 2012, according to recommendations ...

[**FSA launches consultation on date-marking of food products**](#)

Fishnewseu (blog) - 26.03.2010

THE Food Standards Agency (FSA) is seeking views on new date-marking guidance it has drawn up to assist industry when deciding appropriate date marks to use ...

[**12 documentaries to be screened at PNCA**](#)

The News International - Vor 17 Stunden

'The **Salt** Stories' (84') Joint Winner of the Second Best Film Award at **FSA 09'** India, 2008, director Lalit Vachani. In 1930, a group of Indians led by a ...



[WeightWorld](#)

[**FSA calls for reduction in salt intakes to fight obesity**](#)

121doc (blog) - 06.04.2010

The plan is a government reaction to warnings from the **FSA** that cakes, chocolate and even fizzy drinks must contain less saturated fats and **salt** if we are ...

[Unhealthy food and drinks in smaller portions: FSA](#) Little About (blog)

[Food watchdog calls on food and drinks makers to cut fat, sugar](#) Marketing Week

[Experts urge sweet manufacturers to reduce the harmful content of popular snacks](#) WeightWorld

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[Labour's Shamifesto](#)

Huffington Post (blog) - 13.04.2010

Labour will give the **FSA** "additional powers" to "quash" pay where it is a source of risk and instability. This makes for good sound bytes, but how on earth ...

[FSA sets reformulation challenge for food companies](#)

just-food.com (subscription) - 09.04.2010

During the discussions over the **FSA** recommendations much has been made of the **FSA's** success in lowering **salt** consumption. However, while educating consumers ...

[Food watchdog declares war on dietary nasties](#)

Financial Times - 02.04.2010

The **FSA** has already run a **salt** reduction campaign, viewed by campaigners as a success after **salt** intake dropped by 10 per cent nationwide in 2008 - only two ...

[Agency makes recommendations on reducing saturated fat and added sugar in key ...](#) PressZoom
(press release)

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[Examiner.com](#)

[Surfing the Blues: some slop, more chop with Nolan on top](#)

Examiner.com - 12.04.2010

"It was just an incredible event," said Contest Director & **FSA** President Paul West. "I have to thank all of the sponsors that make it work, like **Salt** Life ...



[Eat Out Magazine](#)

[FSA welcomes healthy pub progress](#)

Eat Out Magazine - 23.03.2010

Examples of how chains have made healthier choices include: **Salt** levels have been reduced by all the pub chains, with many products now meeting **FSA** ...

'Education, not regulation' needed in fat and sugar debate

Talking Retail - 30.03.2010

... and simply follow the pattern established by the **FSA** in its successful campaign to work with food manufacturers to lower the level of **salt** in foods. ...

[Focus - FSA in tune with industry on sugar in drinks](#) just-drinks.com (subscription)

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Food Watchdog Criticises No Good Foods

Diet.co.uk - 09.04.2010

The **FSA** is instructing food manufacturers to lower saturated fats in cakes, biscuits and chocolate and to manufacture smaller pack sizes of so called treats ...