



HOW BFFF IS TACKLING SUSTAINABILITY

Hardly a day goes by without another newspaper headline or a News programme raising the issue of sustainability. As the dramatic recent floods have shown, climate change and the need to sustain our planet will be front of mind for the foreseeable future. BFFF have been very active, on our members' behalf, in several areas. The key areas of work are:-

Working with Appropriate Agencies and Other Bodies

- We are working with Envirowise with 40 of our members to assess common issues facing our industry. Envirowise will review the audits undertaken of our participating members and then plan an event to address the issues raised with appropriate key specialists.
- We are working with the Carbon Trust to plan similar work to Envirowise so that our proposed event will cover not only waste but also energy specialists as well.
- We have met with NISP (National Industrial Symbiosis Programme) who effectively hold a massive database of different industries waste streams as well as users of waste streams such as converters, processors and other users. NISP can then match the waste stream to potential users of it to achieve the most economical solution. We hope to develop this opportunity for all our members. At a regional event we attended held in the East Midlands, a company that had a food waste stream was unaware there was a company only 4 miles away who had a use for their waste stream.
- We are meeting WRAP (Waste Resource and Action Programme) to establish how our industry can help reduce waste.
- We are cooperating with other trade associations and Federations such as the FDF and CSDF to compare notes and build on best practice.

Building Objective, Independent Scientific Data

Under the guidance of the Technical Committee, we are forming closer relationships with credible, highly regarded scientific and academic bodies to develop objective data and information.

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In the last month, we have met Leatherhead Food International, Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association, Seafish and the National Physical Laboratory, who are experts in all matters thermal, to investigate how we can work more closely together.

We would like to see an independent highly regarded body complete some work on carbon footprints comparing for a given product, a cooked from scratch meal, compared to a chilled equivalent and a frozen equivalent. It is incumbent upon us to develop objective, scientific data, whatever the outcome.

Considering Temperature Opportunities

We are exploring the opportunity, if it exists, to consider raising temperatures by one, two or three degrees in the supply chain. Currently European legislation only allows companies to label frozen goods as quick frozen if they are maintained at a temperature of -18°C . We do not believe there is a strong scientific reason for that temperature to be used and many believe it just happens to coincide with 0°F . Microbiological growth is stopped at temperatures of -5°C to -6°C and quality (other than ice cream) generally is maintained from around -10°C to -12°C . Ice cream needs to be kept at -15°C to be certain of maintaining quality.

We believe there may be a major energy saving opportunity to move the industry to a target of say -15°C . The 3°C saving would represent an enormous energy saving.

However there are three levels of legislation involved, independent scientific data needs to be collected and hearts and minds need to be won over. This is a real opportunity but is probably on a 10-year timescale.

In the short term, the industry can effect change by simply checking that the industry is working to appropriate temperature tolerances and that we are not building in safety margins on top of safety margins. To this end, four of our producers are conducting temperature-logging trials taking temperature probes from point of manufacture to receipt in customers cold stores. We will analyse the results and then consider completing further work if the data supports it.

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Sharing Best Practice

We ask members to provide information on some of their best initiatives, which we then pass on to help other members, in similar areas, whenever we can. We have, as an example, a duck producer who rear their own ducks and have substantial amounts of slurry to deal with. They have invested in capital equipment to convert the waste slurry into duck manure pellets that can then be used for the land. There are, of course, some areas where our members choose not to provide details they may regard as helping to create competitive advantage but that tends to be the minority.

I have not included all the projects we have in place but I do hope I have painted a picture of how we are tackling the immediate short term opportunities, those projects that may take up to 5 years to come to fruition and also considering radical change that could take at least 10 years to progress.

We are keeping Defra fully informed of all the initiatives we are progressing.

BFFF
September 2007

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