



Paola Testori-Coggi
Director, Directorate D, Food safety
DG SANCO
European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
Brussels B-1049
Belgium

31 March 2005

Dear Paola Testori-Coggi

Recast Commission Directive on Infant Formulae and Follow-on-Formulae

I am writing to add further comments to those already posted on the Commission's website. The Breastfeeding Network is a mother-to-mother support organisation working throughout the UK, with a membership of over 700.

We support the comments already sent by the International Baby Food Action Network, and would like to add an additional concern:

The UK intends to launch a new initiative called Healthy Start which will replace the existing welfare food scheme, which operates through the use of milk tokens. Under the existing scheme mothers in receipt of welfare food tokens have some protection from companies who use 'health and nutritional claims' to promote sales because many of these brands are not available on the tokens. In opening up the choice of foods that can be purchased under the new scheme an unintended consequence is that the market for these particular brands may be increased. Our experience shows that families find health and nutrition claims very powerful and will be persuaded to try these brands. Mothers and babies who qualify for the new scheme are already vulnerable to exploitation so this will place an added strain on already limited family budgets and will be detrimental to infant health.

Health and nutrition claims on foods for infants and young children can also undermine mothers who are breastfeeding - already we see mothers giving a daily bottle of formula to their breastfed babies just to ensure that they don't miss out on any nutrients. We urge the EU to protect families equitably by preventing these health and nutrition claims from being used.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Saunby (Trustee)
On behalf of all the Trustees of The Breastfeeding Network

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