

## **RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION GREEN PAPER : “PROMOTING HEALTHY DIETS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY”**

### **Introduction**

1. J. Sainsbury plc comprises Sainsbury's supermarkets, convenience stores, a home shopping service and Sainsbury's Bank. Sainsbury's Supermarkets is Britain's longest-standing major food retailing chain. A large Sainsbury's supermarket offers around 30,000 products, 50% of which are Sainsbury's own-brand including fresh produce. Sainsbury's serves over 15m customers a week. We have over 700 stores.

2. Health is at the heart of our business. Our aim is to make healthier eating easier, enjoyable and affordable for all our customers including those with special dietary needs. We launched our first healthy eating initiative in 1994. More recently we have recognised the importance of “calories out” as well as “calories in”.

### **General comments on the Green paper**

3. We very much welcome the Green Paper and in particular the recognition that a healthy lifestyle is as much about exercise as it is about diet. Both sides of the equation are equally important and have to be addressed if the health issues identified by the European Commission are to be successfully tackled.

4. As a major food retailer, at Sainsbury's we recognise we have a role and responsibility in addressing some of these health issues. The four main areas where we have a particular role to play are:

- communication: giving our customers clear information about the products we sell
- choice: giving customers a range of products, including healthier ones, at fair prices
- content: ensuring that our own-brand products are as healthy as they can be
- encouragement: actively promoting a healthier lifestyle.

5. We highlight below some of the initiatives we have taken in order to help our customers lead healthier lifestyles. We would be pleased to provide more information about any of these initiatives.

### **Regulation vs Market Forces?**

6. It is important to note that to a large extent Health is a competitive issue for the food industry. Health is a major concern for our customers – and therefore for us - as well as for national governments and the European Commission. This means that, although there are issues of common consensus, there will also be issues on which we will want to take the initiative in order to meet the needs of our own customers.

7. The Green Paper poses the question about how far regulation can be used to tackle some of the Health problems identified and how much the market can be relied on to do this. We fully recognise the need for and desirability of some regulation, for example in the area of food safety. However, there is a risk that too much regulation will actually be counter-productive and work against the interests of our customers. Innovation may be stifled (e.g. the development of new products or schemes to meet the needs of customers) or, in order to find a common position across Member States, Health standards may be set too low, instead of relying on market influences (customer demand) to raise standards. On the whole,

commercial imperatives will always drive business to move more quickly and more flexibly than regulation.

8. However Government - at national and EU level – has a key role to play in working with business to raise awareness of health issues and, for example, to protect consumers from unscrupulous businesses that seek to make misleading claims about the alleged health benefits of products. Government also has a key role to play in ensuring the implementation of other, wider policies that influence healthier lifestyles, e.g. a safe and healthy environment that encourages activities such as walking and sports, and ensuring that nutrition education and activity takes place in schools.

### **Some relevant Sainsbury's initiatives**

9. Responding to concerns about the need for clear signposting to help customers make informed decisions about the food they eat, we have developed an innovative **multiple traffic light labelling system called the Wheel of Health**. The Wheel of Health appears on the front of pack and features five key nutrients that are colour coded as: “Red – enjoy it once in a while; Amber – ok most of the time; or Green – go for it.” The contribution of five nutrients to the Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) is shown - salt, fat, saturated fat, sugar and calories per serving. We launched the Wheel of Health in January 2005. Our research shows that Sainsbury's customers like the Wheel of Health. Our Wheel of Health is compatible with the UK Food Standards Agency's (FSA) recommended approach to front of pack labelling. The Wheel of Health is on over 1,200 Sainsbury's products and it is gradually being rolled out across all our products.

10. Sainsbury's use our own '**5-a-day**' logo on packs across all our product ranges to make it even easier for customers to boost their fruit and vegetable intake.

11. Sainsbury's has a team of regional **Food Advisors** who work within their local communities to promote healthy eating. They support Sainsbury's healthy eating activities all year round both in-store and within the local community. This includes activities such as running customer diabetes store tours, “healthy eating for a healthy weight” store tours (linking in with local General Medical Practitioners), healthy eating cookery demonstrations in our stores, and colleague health training.

12. Sainsbury's **Food Advisors** have also been trained by Jamie Oliver, the celebrity chef, to go into schools across the UK to help motivate and educate children to eat healthy food. They have been assigned to work with schools in 25 regions across the country to encourage children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits through fun, interactive sessions that will include demonstrations, sampling and practical advice. Parents will also be involved to spread the healthy eating message.

13. Sainsbury's '**Taste of Success**' Award Scheme, in partnership with the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) and the Design and Technology Association (DATA) supports food studies and cooking in the curriculum and recognise pupil's achievements in good practical food and nutrition skills. This scheme is run across the UK and over 350,000 pupils have gained these skills to date and received a Sainsbury's Taste of Success Gold, Silver or Bronze award. The scheme is supported by the UK Government's Department for Education and Skills (DFES). With the support of our two partners, DATA and BNF, and of the DFES, in 2006 we will be rebranding Taste of Success as “Active Kids, Get Cooking”

14. In the last 10 years or so Sainsbury's have produced a number of **healthy living leaflets** for our customers; these include: Food Safety, Putting Healthy Eating into Practice; Food for the School Years; Looking after Your Heart; The Quick and Easy Way to Eating 5 a Day; and Diabetes – a happy balance. In addition, since January 2006, we have invited

customers to try something new by encouraging them to take five simple steps to health. There is sampling in-store to encourage people to take five simple steps to develop healthier habits for life: eat more wholegrain, eat more good fats, taste more (to replace salt with herbs and spices), eat more fruit and vegetables, drink more (water). **A free challenge handbook – “Go on, Be Good To Yourself”** - spells out these five steps along with tasty, healthy recipes. Our customer restaurants are also promoting healthier eating.

15. Our **employees** will also be able to buy healthier meals in our colleague restaurants and will have their own Healthy Challenge to encourage them to eat more healthily and to talk to customers about healthy eating. A well-being training programme for our colleagues is also under development and is being rolled out across our business.

16. Following research in May 1999, Sainsbury's developed the '**Be Good To Yourself**' (BGTY) range with the objective of creating a range of lower fat and calorie options across a wide variety of products. In January 2006 we re-launched BGTY, along with a new apple stamp that appears on all BGTY products and is the symbol of health at Sainsbury's. All products in the BGTY range are nutritionally balanced. There are 450 products in the range, including 150 new ones, all of which fall into one of three categories:

- less than 3% fat;
- a healthier option, that is products that have less salt, saturated fat and fewer calories than standard product lines;
- “plus”, that is products that are fortified with added ingredients such as pre-biotics, Omega 3 and pro-biotics.

17. Every BGTY product has the Wheel of Health on the front which will show only ambers or greens, since reds will not be permitted on BGTY products; the only exceptions are products that contain healthy fats such as from seeds and nuts, or high sugar levels naturally derived from fruit. In addition to the BGTY range, about 200 foods that are naturally healthier, such as skinless chicken fillets, will carry the healthy apple stamp.

18. In 2002 Sainsbury's launched its '**Free From**' range, a specially produced range of gluten, wheat or dairy free products to meet the needs of an increasing number of people in the UK suffering from food allergies or intolerances – indeed between 5-7% of children suffer from some form of allergy. Allergy UK, the UK's leading charity for allergy sufferers, endorses the range.

19. We recognise the importance of making healthier food affordable for all. In 2005 we relaunched our low price range as "**Basics**", which features food and non-food items including many healthier food lines such as fresh fruit and vegetables. The Basics range now includes around 500 products. The range carries full nutritional labelling and tips on healthy eating where possible.

20. Sainsbury's have been actively reducing **salt** in our own brand products for many years. In October 1999 we launched an initiative to reduce the salt content of own brand foods by 10-15% without compromising on safety or eating quality. In 2004 we launched a 3 year strategy for reducing salt in five key product categories: sandwiches, pizzas, ready meals, soups and breakfast cereals, which was welcomed by the UK Government. Targets were set in consultation with the FSA, setting upper salt limits for our own label products in these categories. We are on course to meet the FSA's 2010 salt reduction targets. This will result in over 2,000 tonnes of salt being removed from our own brand products. We have already met the FSA target for salt reduction in bread – in January 2006 we re-launched our standard Sainsbury's sliced loaf of bread which has 15% less salt and has added fibre. However the bread still tastes the same and is no more expensive than conventional loaves.

21. Sainsbury's was a pioneer in 2001 with the launch of our '**Blue Parrot Café**' (BPC) healthier food range for children. In February 2006 we replaced BPC with a new range of products aimed at children. All products in the range are nutritionally balanced and free from artificial colours and flavours. A selection of products in this range has also been fortified to meet the nutritional requirements of children.

22. With the continuing national debate surrounding physical activity amongst children, in 2005 Sainsbury's developed a major campaign that aims to inspire pupils and teachers alike to get more active. The Sainsbury's '**Active Kids**' campaign aims to address the "calories out" side of childhood obesity. Under the scheme, for which Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes is our ambassador, customers are given an Active Kids voucher for every £10 they spend at Sainsbury's, with bonus vouchers for buying healthier products. These vouchers are then collected by schools and redeemed for a wide range of innovative activity and sports equipment. Almost 23,000 schools – that is 80% of UK schools - signed up to collect Active Kids vouchers in 2005. As a consequence Sainsbury's donated around £17m of sports and activity equipment to schools across the UK.

23. Active Kids started again in February 2006 and we have extended the scheme to nursery and special schools. So far, over 29,000 schools have signed up for Active Kids.

24. As part of Active Kids, we have also donated £500,000 to the **Youth Sports Trust** to help with the training of 20,000 teachers in sports skills.

25. In September 2005 we announced our sponsorship of the **English Schools Athletics Association (ESAA)**. Through a grass-roots deal, we are supporting the ESAA, the English Schools' Championships and its long established Awards Scheme for the next 3 years.

26. Sainsbury's has been sponsoring the **English Schools Under 11s Football Association Cup** for the last 2 years and we are continuing to do so in 2006. We are also the official retail sponsor of the **England Football Team** for the World Cup.

27. We have worked alongside Comic Relief for 8 years and in 2005 we helped raise £7m for the charity. In June 2005, we announced our commitment to support the biennial Red Nose Day and **Sport Relief**. One highlight will be the "Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile" in July 2006 (<http://www.sportrelief.com/>).

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