



SCDP

FARE CHOICE

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY DIET PROJECT

ALL TALK AND ALL ACTION

Hardly a week goes by without at least one meeting taking place somewhere in Scotland looking at food and health. The encouraging thing however, is not just the number of meetings but that they tend to involve key players from different sectors and, perhaps most importantly of all, they are increasingly designed to improve the support given to work on the ground.

In the fortnight prior to the publication of this issue of Fare Choice, staff at SCDP took part in events all over the country. Whether it was with workers from pre-five establishments in Argyll and Dumbarton¹, a Breakfast Club seminar in Ayrshire² or a 'Food Summit'³ in Fife, the common theme was a commitment to work together to take practical action. The enthusiasm at all these gatherings to do 'something' was only matched by their frustration to do 'more'.

At a national level too, both the ongoing Expert Panel on School Meals⁴ and the promised

Breakfast Service Review and Challenge Fund⁵ have very practical objectives, and Scotland's Food and Health Co-ordinator has clearly been prioritising initiatives since her appointment (see interview page 9).

This edition of Fare Choice also highlights academic research linked to a very practical activity, namely cooking (see page 4) as well as promoting a national conference, which couldn't be more grassroots and well-grounded! (see page 3).

It is important that this focus on the practical continues to be supported by clear policies, strategies and resources, to ensure local activity is as effective, sustainable and joined-up as possible.

Recent action on food health at a glance:

¹ Launch of a pack for use in early years establishments held in Inveraray, 26 February and Dumbarton, 7 March.

² Breakfast Club Seminar, Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock, 18 March.

³ Fife Food Summit, Dunfermline 19 March.

⁴ For further information on the work of the panel a website has been established www.scotland.gov.uk/schoolmeals.

⁵ See www.scotland.gov.uk/pages/news/2001/11/SE4914.aspx for Scottish Executive press release.

On this issue's menu.....

National conference on
community food growing
in Ayr on April 30
see page 3

Deadline for SCDP
small grants May 31
see page 7 to get an
application form

The Food and Health
Co-ordinator answers
YOUR questions
on page 9

Policy roundup



Scotland

Two Scottish members will sit on the **new Consumer Committee** announced by the Food Standards Agency. The Committee will help to ensure that the Agency's policy-making is open to a wide range of consumer interests, and that its decisions are based on a full understanding of consumer needs and views. The two Scottish members are: Nancy Robson, self-employed food critic and restaurant inspector for 'Taste of Scotland' and Graeme Miller, Chairman of the Scottish Consumer Council. The Committee's role will be to: alert the Agency to key issues of current or emerging consumer concern; comment on the Agency's strategic objectives and forward plan; provide feedback on the effectiveness of its policies in responding to consumer concerns; advise on consumer consultation methodologies, including ways of reaching vulnerable and hard to reach groups; review the work of consumer representatives on advisory committees; facilitate joint-working between the Agency and consumer groups and offer advice on any other issues that may be referred to it by the Agency.

The first 'progress report' on how the Scottish Executive's four year £100m **Health Improvement Fund** is being used to improve Scotland's health has been published by Health Minister, Malcolm Chisholm. The Report 'Putting the Pieces in Place' details how communities are benefiting from the decision to use Scotland's share of extra tobacco tax revenue to carry out innovative work in areas such as improving diet, taking more physical activity and improving mental health. Projects range from a Lanarkshire initiative to improve low birth weight levels (see page 10), to a project in Moray which has helped to reduce smoking levels among under 16s. The report is available on the Scottish Executive website at www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/health

National care standards have been announced, which for the first time will regulate care at home. The four sets of standards unveiled by Health Minister, Malcolm Chisholm, will also cover care home services for people with mental health

problems, physical and sensory impairments, and learning disabilities and are similar to they standards launched earlier this year for older people. These nationally agreed standards state amongst other things that people using services are fully involved in care decisions affecting their lifestyle, diet, general health and daily activities; and that their social, cultural and religious beliefs are respected. The regulation of care project website is www.scotland.gov.uk/government/rcp/

A new consultative forum has been launched to give **older people** and their organisations greater say in the development of Scottish Executive policy. Call Jim Richardson 0131 244 2132 at the Older Peoples Unit at the Executive for more information.



United Kingdom

Food Poverty Eradication Bill now has a full time worker, Ron Bailey based at Sustain. Call 0207 278 5755 or visit www.foodpoverty.org.uk for an update on progress in parliament.



European

Franz Fischler, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, warned '*The consumer must be free to choose between **GM and non-GM products**. In order to do so, we have to introduce an EU-wide labelling system.*' He explained that the Commission had already brought forward a coherent strategy on how to deal with GMOs, including clear labelling provision for consumers. He labelled the consumers role in this context as '*absolutely paramount*'



International

In February more than 1,400 Ecuadorian banana workers at seven plantations took strike action for the first time in over 20 years. If the registration of the new union they have formed is approved by the Labour Minister, this will be the first independent banana workers' union since the 1970s. For more information contact the UK charity Banana Link call 01603 765 670, email blink@gn.apc.org or visit www.bananalink.org.uk.



Award update

The Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme (SHCAS) has had some staff changes recently. Catriona Macfarlane the Project Co-ordinator for almost 3 years has left to enjoy some time in the French Alps. Claire Brown joined the team in January as the new Project Co-ordinator and the team had two new additions back in August, Barbara McDougall, Project Administrator and Yvonne Garry, Development Officer. Keira Farley has also recently joined the team and is based at HEBS, who work jointly with the SHCAS to administer the Award Scheme.

Recently within Scotland, school meals and their nutritional value have been in the spotlight, and coming up soon is the Local Authority Caterers Association National School Meals Week, running from the 15 –19 April, with the emphasis on the 'Balance of Good Health' and keeping fit.

Within Scotland many schools already provide the choice of healthy and balanced food, with an impressive 174 schools currently holding the Scottish Healthy Choices Award. SHCAS offers schools an avenue to gain a recognised seal of approval for steps they may already be taking or are striving towards to improve the nutritional value of their school meals by offering the choice of a healthy option to pupils at lunchtime.

The most recent additions to the Award winners list are 19 schools from Clackmannanshire, so a huge congratulations to them. SHCAS was implemented some time ago throughout all Ayrshire & Arran primary schools, and the schools have since been re-awarded - no mean feat! Lothian have been successful with 36 of their primary schools achieving the Award, Tayside have 8 Awards in schools and the Western Isles have 5. Well done to all of them and good luck to the many schools in other local council areas that are currently working towards SHCAS.

To find out more about SHCAS, call 0141 226 5261, email shcas@scotconsumer.org.uk or visit www.shcas.co.uk

CONFERENCE COMING UP

Growing Interest

An opportunity to share news and views with others working on community food growing in Scotland



Tuesday 30 April 2002

Oswald Hall Conference Centre, Auchincruive, near Ayr 10.15 am to 3.30 pm

A networking conference organised by:
The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, The Scottish Co-op and The Scottish Community Diet Project

Workshops will cover policy and practical community food growing in Scotland. The day will include:

- ? A crofter
- ? Growing in schools
- ? City farms
- ? A policy overview
- ? A free copy of Growing Interest
- ? Support for food growing in Scotland

For more details on this FREE conference and a booking form contact Debbie at the SCDP 0141 226 5261 or download a booking form from www.dietproject.org.uk



An insight into the world of research provided by members of the Scottish Colloquium On Feeding and Food

The CookWell Project - Do cooking skills programmes in the community help to bring about dietary change?

Activities involving food and cooking have been given a lot of attention in recent years. The most recent edition of the Directory of Scottish Community Food Initiatives (available free from SCDP) lists over 170 community food projects of which over 50 include cooking skills as part of their activities. Several of these projects have demonstrated the benefits brought about by providing cooking skills classes. However few have the resources to carry out a controlled assessment to see if cooking skills intervention actually improves nutritional intake and consumption of the foods highlighted in the Scottish Diet Action Plan.

The CookWell project, funded by the Food Standards Agency, has developed, implemented and evaluated a transferable, community-based, food skills programme aimed at increasing consumption of fibre-rich starchy carbohydrates, fish, vegetables and fruit and decreasing consumption of fat in adults living in areas of deprivation.

During the period 2000-2001, the CookWell programme was run in locations throughout Scotland for a period of approximately 2-3 months in each community. Eight communities (with 6-10 participants in, or expected in, the intervention group) were recruited and the programme delivery staggered to allow the project research worker to run the classes as necessary (although local instructors have led the groups in 4 of the locations). These community projects included a child and family project in a church in Dundee, a community education centre in Greenock, a community café in Edinburgh, a child and family centre in Alloa and a community school in Hawick.

The process of establishing the intervention used a community development approach taking account of perceived needs of the groups, defined dietary targets and resources (money, time, skills and retail facilities). Results from preliminary focus groups were used to inform the development of the programme. Early discussions suggested that popular topics include soups and budget cookery, but that interest in fish and vegetables is low. Using this information a CookWell manual was designed to enable facilitators to follow a standardised, but flexible, programme in each community.

Evaluation used pre- and post assessments of food intakes (highlighted in dietary targets), cooking skills, household food budgets and expenditure in intervention and delayed intervention groups. A 'delayed intervention' group was necessary in each community to provide a control for comparison with those who had joined in the CookWell classes. These groups have now completed all assessments, and are doing CookWell sessions now. The post assessments were carried out immediately after the initial intervention, and 6 months later to evaluate the longer term impact of the programme. In-depth structured interviews have been carried out and will provide valuable additional data on the acceptability and impact of the overall programme on the families of those involved.

The results of the assessments are intended to contribute to the evidence base on the contribution and value of food skills to healthy dietary choices at reasonable costs. If successful the materials and methods used in the project will be taken forward in conjunction with the SCDP and for use through the National Food Alliance (now Sustain). The practical intervention and follow-up assessments have now been completed and a final report will be sent to the Food Standards Agency at the end of June 2002. The CookWell manual has been well received and from the feedback we have obtained from course leaders and participants we hope to produce a revised version and make it available to anyone who wants to get involved in cooking skills groups.

The researchers are grateful to the many people who have been involved in the CookWell



programme and hope that the project has been able to contribute positively to developing skills in the communities. The researchers were really pleased to hear that some groups have continued cooking after the course finished (this group was led by a member of the local community), and that another group continue to meet to learn new skills in other areas e.g. art and aerobics. The impact of the CookWell programme and similar initiatives may not necessarily be translated into simply improving uptake of certain 'healthy' foods (although there is already some evidence of this) but in the less tangible benefits such as bringing people together, forming new friendships and building confidence.

In the development of the programme two people said:

'I'm quite useless at cooking. It'll be quite an experience for me because I'd love tae be able tae cook lots o' things from scratch, but I just havenae attempted it. I'm never, I was never shown how tae dae it, so it's just like a box oot the freezer.'

and

'I don't know how to, you know, make up proper meals, you know, it's always things oot a boxes, ah cannae just you know make up a curry, things like that, I'd like to be able to make like more interesting things. Ah do all sorts o' frozen things, but I cannae just make up a meal, like from scratch.'

After CookWell we heard comments such as: *'Oh aye, it was good. I was quite proud of myself with all my big dishes, going home. Aye they liked it too 'cause they didnae know what they were getting for their supper...it was brightening their life too'*

and

'I'm more daring now'.

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Grants Count Down!!!

With only a few weeks to go until the closing date for the SCDP's small grants scheme, the race is on to get your application forms completed and returned to the SCDP before **Friday 31 May 2002.**

Requests from across Scotland for grant application forms has hit record levels this year, and already a rich diversity of applications are beginning to arrive in the SCDP mailbag.

Last year 36 community food initiatives were delighted to receive SCDP small grants of up to £3000 as a result of increased funds from the Scottish Executive. From food growing projects to cooking skills courses, initiatives have used their creativity and energy to make these small pots of cash go a long way as well as make a big difference in many Scottish communities. This year the SCDP has been allocated a budget of £75,000 for small grants by the Scottish Executive. Due to the very high quality of applications each year, competition for a limited SCDP grants budget is fierce. However, in the near future a funding guide specifically for community food projects in Scotland will be prepared by the SCDP, which will hopefully sign post projects to other potential sources of funding throughout the UK. Watch out for more details soon!

Meantime, if you have still to request an application form, or would simply like to discuss the SCDP grant making process in more detail, or indeed chat about your ideas for putting a grant to use, please do not hesitate to contact Lizanne Hume at the SCDP. Hurry though before time runs out!! Tel 0141 226 5261, email lhume@scotconsumer.org.uk or forms can also be downloaded from the SCDP website www.dietproject.org.uk

Don't forget!

We want to know about what you are doing!
 The deadline for articles and information for the next issue is 21 June 2002.

Take Stock

Knowetop Community Farm Project

Knowetop Community Farm Project started in 1980 in West Dunbarton. Initially the farm consisted of makeshift huts, a few goats, chickens, rabbits and a band of committed people. Hard work was the order of the day, pallets were collected and laid so that work could begin regardless of the mud and lemonade bottles were collected to pay for the feed.

The farm was set up because the area suffered from high deprivation and it was seen as a way of providing recreational, educational and employment opportunities for the local population. The aims of the farm are laid out in a box on page 7. The farm has now snowballed from three huts to 6 acres. Mary Sweeney one of the original founders is still involved with the project.



Kids enjoy touching the animals

The site has recently become a registered training centre for animal care and horticulture through the Scottish Qualification Authority as well as a New Deal provider since January through the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. The farm has also taken a great interest in the Growing School Initiative supported by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and it is now putting together its own educational pack.

Admission to the farm is free but a small charge is made for group and school visits if they require a guided tour. Children are encouraged to touch the animals and hand washing is strictly supervised afterwards. *'We have children who come here who have never seen a goat or chicken before'* recounts David the farm co-ordinator. *'One boy couldn't believe that a chicken came from an egg.'* David has since contacted the Egg Council to order educational materials to help explain the process. David is keen to install an incubator so that if schools book 21 days in advance they can see eggs hatching on the day of the visit.

Recent plans for expansion have been encouraged by funders. *'Funders always want to see progress'* explains David *'and for a long time the farm was a small project which relied on volunteer help, now we have 5 paid staff and we feel we can meet more of the requirements of the users. New funding and future funding will enable us to provide a service to a larger area than just Castlehill. To survive we have to develop, for a long time we have only been here by the skin of our teeth'* says David. Maintaining a good working relationship with funders is essential; the farm works closely with Lennox Partnership, West Dunbartonshire SIP Partnership, West Dunbartonshire Council and many other organisations.

The garden produces vegetables in accordance with organic principles and was developed three years ago. It will shortly be seeking certification from the Soil Association. The vegetable garden was established by Rose Harvic, a devoted adult volunteer who maintains the vegetable plots throughout the year, Assistance is given from the Community Fund and a small grant from SCDP. Both grants allow the farm to sell vegetables at a subsidised price directly to local residents and visitors in the summer.

So how do people get to hear about the farm?

Leaflets are regularly sent to the local libraries and job clubs. Free publicity is given in the local paper and there are also entries in the SCDP's and Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens' directories. There are road signs from the main



road through Dumbarton. The key problem for the farm is access for buses and vans. School buses have to park a short distance away and children must walk the last leg of the route. This situation may change when the area is redeveloped as the farm is seen as a valuable part of the community.



Vegetables from the garden sold on site

In the past applications were made for grants, irrespective of the circumstances, but now a business plan has been put in place. This means that everyone involved from staff and volunteers to the Management Committee, know what the farm aims to achieve and can match the farm's criteria to the funder's requirements. *'Before we had a business plan there was little consistency between our aims and the requests we made to funders'* explains David.

Plans are being prepared for future developments including additional paddocks, an educational unit, wildlife corridors and a pond.

For more information contact David Gallacher, Project & Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01389 732 734. The farm is open 7 days, 10am - 4pm (late opening in summer months).

The aims of Knowetop Community Farm:

To promote organic farming and gardening, the preservation of rare and unusual farm animals, the protection of natural wildlife and the maintenance of a conservation area to people who visit the farm. This is done by achieving the following objectives:

1. To promote, maintain, improve and advance education, particularly by the promotion and advancement of knowledge in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, care of animals and other ancillary projects.
2. In the interest of social welfare, to provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time pursuits with the aim of improving the conditions of life of the persons for whom such facilities are primarily intended, being persons who have need of such facilities by reasons of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances, provided that nevertheless such facilities shall be available to the members of the public at large.



We want to know about your project

Take Stock is an opportunity for community food projects to explain how they started, what they do and possible plans for the future. Fare Choice hopes that all community food projects will benefit from finding out about other people's experiences. If you would like your project to be featured so readers can share your experience get in contact with Lucy on 0141 226 5261 or e-mail lgillie@scotconsumer.org.uk



Publications

The report 'Farming and Food: A Sustainable Future' from the Commission for Farming and Food is also referred to as the **Curry Report** and is available from www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/farming. It is some 140 pages long. The recommendations are only applicable to England and Wales but will be noted by policy makers in Scotland. Key recommendations include the recognition that opportunities to promote fruit and vegetable consumption are good for health and good for business as well as a proposed 30 year nutrition strategy.

A report on food standards at **farmers' markets in Scotland** was presented to the Scottish Food Advisory Committee an independent body set up to provide advice to the Food Standards Agency on food issues affecting Scotland. The working group was set up amid concerns that consumers shopping at farmers' markets were not as well-protected as those shopping at other food retail outlets. The report is available from the Food Standards Agency at www.food.gov.uk or call 01224 285 100.

'Even the Tatties are Battered' is published by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and sets out the organisation's case for **free school meals in Scotland**. Call CPAG on 0141 552 4404 to order a copy.

Renfrewshire Food Federation is an umbrella group and has just published a report which aims to highlight just how widespread the issue of **food poverty and accessibility to healthy, affordable, fresh produce** is in the Renfrewshire area. The Federation is a community-based group which has recently been awarded just under £90,000 from Have a Heart Paisley. The report covers the advantages of a mobile shop to the area and the results of a shopping basket survey of a basic day's shopping. Call Have a Heart Paisley for more information on 0141 587 2479.

'**Improving Breakfast Clubs**: Lessons from the Best' reports the findings of a study of breakfast clubs which won Breakfast Club awards. Contact the New Policy Institute for details on 0207721 8421 or visit www.npi.org.uk

Young Scots need to be more aware of food safety issues

The risk of food poisoning in Scotland could be reduced if key food safety and hygiene messages are printed prominently on food labels, says the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC).

The SCC wants the idea of using food labels in this way to be examined by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to help improve public understanding of how to transport, store and cook food safely.

This is one of the recommendations contained in a new report which calls for more to be done to inform and educate consumers on food safety and hygiene matters. A list of 'top ten' food safety messages has already been produced. However the SCC wants the FSA to consider drawing up a smaller list of main messages which should be promoted to the public to get key information across to consumers.

The report, 'Young People and Food Safety' has been produced following research conducted among Scottish school children which found serious gaps in their understanding of food safety issues. The SCC says that similar research is now needed among adults to discover if lack of awareness of important food safety messages is widespread.

More than 2,200 second year pupils at 108 secondary schools across Scotland completed a questionnaire drawn up by the SCC on food safety and hygiene issues. The average score was 11.8 out of a possible 20.

To download a copy of the report visit www.scotconsumer.org.uk or call SCC on 0141 226 5261 to order a copy.

Sorry - in last quarters Fare Choice we printed the web site address for the Men's Health and Well-being Network incorrectly. Community Health UK are currently updating their website www.chuk.org where information will be found in the future.



Question time

Gillian Kynoch Scotland's Food and Health Co-ordinator answers questions sent in by Fare Choice readers

Q The link between food production and health has been raised on a number of occasions. What do you think about it and what's being done? [from a reader in Skye]

A The nature of food production impacts directly on the environment, and both directly and indirectly on public health. It has been argued that a diverse range of foods produced in a sustainable way can increase biodiversity and enhance landscapes. Local food production may also help improve access to fresh food, in particular fruits and vegetables, by making them more locally available and affordable. Improved local networks, increased local employment opportunities, and the physical activity associated with local food production all serve potentially to support and promote public health in its widest sense.

The Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS), in partnership with the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) and Health Department (SEHD), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scottish Enterprise (SE), the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC), Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) and Scotland's Food Futures projects have combined to commission research to review the economic, environmental, health and social value of the local food sector in Scotland.

In the wider food industry there is growing enthusiasm between those involved in promoting healthy eating and the industry, and there are already a number of initiatives up and running, such as the work of Create Interest, which is sponsored by Scottish Enterprise and who are actively engaging with schools and the Scottish food industry. I am keen to develop the working relationship between these two key interests and, as part of my work to improve diet across the Scottish population, one of my key priorities is to work closely with the Scottish food industry to explore how best this relationship might operate.

Q What support and advice can you give to areas who want to implement local diet action plans? [from a reader in Grampian]

A Whilst some of the work outlined in the Diet Action Plan requires to be driven nationally, much depends on action at a local level and several areas have already developed their own mini diet action plan. This is the case for instance in Glasgow, Forth Valley, West Lothian and Highlands (I would be very interested to receive information and copies of others). Working in partnership with national organisations, such as HEBS and SCDP, as well as local key interests and community projects, these plans should aim to outline realistic and practical actions to address the changes which are required to enable people in their local communities to have access to a healthier diet and, in turn, to improve the national diet as a whole. How much interest would there be in a one day seminar bringing together areas already working in this way with those who would like to be?

Q Scotland is not the only country which suffers health problems related to a poor diet. What do you think we can learn from other countries? [from a reader in East Lothian]

A The recent Healthy Scotland Convention that was held towards the end of 2001 highlighted the dietary status of a number of countries, both those that have a similar health status to Scotland, such as Slovenia and Portugal, and those who have made improvements to the diet of the population such as the Scandinavian countries. One of the key messages to emerge from this conference, and which was a key point made by Dr Danzon, Director for Europe at the World Health Organisation, involved encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their health and for making the changes that will lead to a better diet. This can be achieved through increasing access to information, health and healthcare. Dr Danzon encouraged us to have aspirational goals in terms of health and to plan for making significant improvement a reality.

If you would like to respond contact Lucy at SCDP details on back page.



News

The first cases of adult-type **diabetes** have been found in overweight white children in the UK. The disclosure provides highly disturbing evidence of the threat to health posed by growing levels of obesity in the developed world. It has also prompted a warning that rising rates of obesity among the young will place a serious burden on the health service in years to come.

A support group has been set up to provide organic farmers in the **Dumfries and Galloway** region with a forum for sharing ideas, expertise and common concerns. It may also give its members the opportunity to sell produce and to meet up with other farmers following organic standards. Contact: Ross Paton, Torr Farm, Auchencairn on 01556 640 247 or email rosspaton@farmline.com

No one is better placed to know what young people want than young people themselves, and this view was endorsed by the Minister for Education and Young People Cathy Jamieson at the **Youth Cafes in Action** conference in Dingwall in February. The project was established to provide a network of youth cafes in the north of Scotland as places where young people can meet and take part in a range of activities. Youth Cafes in Action is a three year pilot project, which began in 1999 and has been developed by the Prince's Trust and its partners. It aims to develop a sustainable network of youth cafes in the Highlands, Western Isles and Orkney as places where young people can meet and participate in a range of activities. The project employs a Development Officer based in Invergordon. Funding for the project has been confirmed from the Prince's Trust, Scottish Hydro-Electric, The Rank Foundation, Ross and Cromarty Enterprise, BBC Children in Need, Changemakers and the Highland Wellbeing Alliance.

Biotechnology, Environment and Health conference was held in Inverness in February and attended by 300 people. **GM trials** are still taking place in the Black Isle and there is a permanent vigil site by the ground (call Anthony on 07720 817847 if you would like to take part in the vigil).

One of the protesters, an organic farmer, served a 10 day prison sentence and a petition has been sent to the Scottish Parliament calling for a stop to GM trials.

Lorry drivers have been advised to skip their traditional fry-ups in favour of more healthy alternatives. A nutritionist has been brought in at Eddie Stobart, the UK's largest independent road haulier, to advise its 1,200 drivers on how to eat healthily and reduce the risk of heart disease. The Carlisle-based company's campaign began with free cholesterol tests followed by dietary advice.

A Glasgow professor is to chair a group of eminent scientists, academics and consumer experts who will guide the **Food Standards Agency's £30.8 million research programme**. The independent Advisory Committee on Research will be chaired by Michael Lean, Professor in Human Nutrition at the University of Glasgow.

Hundreds of mums-to-be in Lanarkshire are to benefit from vouchers to buy healthy food, as part of a new scheme to encourage healthy eating in pregnancy. The scheme, the first of its kind in the UK, will also be available to mothers who choose to breast feed for a maximum of three months after the birth of their baby. The women to benefit will be issued with a photographic ID card to present when using their vouchers. The vouchers can then be used in ASDA stores in Hamilton and Blantyre to buy a variety of healthy foods. **The Best Fed Babies scheme** was introduced after a study showed that babies born in the Hamilton and Blantyre area were almost twice as likely to be born with a low birth weight as those in the rest of Lanarkshire. Birth weight is believed by health professionals to be an early indicator of health in later life. In Lanarkshire, just 12.4 per cent of new mums breast feed for the crucial first six weeks, one third of the Scottish average.

Some **children's foods** are so nutritionally poor they should carry health warnings, a report for organic children's food company Organix (carried out by Mintel International). The research showed that only nine percent of parents had no concerns over the food they gave their children.



A recent conference aimed at promoting **healthy eating in Fife** 'Eating Well – A Food Summit for Fife' was organised by Fife NHS Board and Fife Council and held at the Dunfermline Business Learning and Conference Centre in March. The conference was attended by those who have an interest in promoting healthy food choices, or work within the food sector. The programme featured a variety of speakers, and topics covered included the context of food and health in Fife; the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme; community food initiatives for Fife; Bill Gray from SCDP and proposed work on food in schools. There was also a presentation on the Fruit and Vegetables for Pre-school Children Scheme, aimed at encouraging young children to develop healthy eating habits. Through the scheme, all Fife Council nurseries, and their partnership providers, have access to free fruit and vegetables on a daily basis.

School meals are a topical issue and Children in Scotland have created an opportunity for children and young people to be consulted. A special website has been created involving an interactive questionnaire www.childreninscotland.org.uk/tellusabout. If your group/school takes part in this questionnaire, please contact Children in Scotland at consultations@childreninscotland.org.uk letting them know that you have done so, with any comments you may have. They will then send you a copy of the final report when the consultation has finished.

Could your project benefit?

HEBS run a programme of **courses** and conferences which range from working with the media, to training for advisers call 0131 536 5500 to order a free brochure.

Disclosure Scotland is about protecting the vulnerable by **safer recruitment**. The service has been set up by the Scottish Criminal Record Office and is a new system of disclosing criminal history information to individuals and organisations for employment and other purposes. Visit www.disclosurescotland.co.uk or call 0141 585 8495 for more information.

Promoting breast feeding

The Breastfeeding Initiative was set up to assist women in making an informed choice about infant feeding by Greater Glasgow Primary Care NHS Trust.

The aim of the initiative is to contribute to an increase in the rate of breastfeeding to 6 weeks and beyond. The areas served in Glasgow by the initiative to date are Easterhouse, Parkhead, Bridgeton, Townhead, Govanhill, Gorbals and Riverside Local Health Care Co-op.

In previous generations, most mums would breastfeed their children. This meant that the majority of people had contact with a number of breastfeeding role models from an early age. The initiative aims to recreate this type of support by providing volunteers to help with antenatal and postnatal support to breastfeeding families.

The helpers are local mothers who have breastfed themselves and wish to help other women have a positive breastfeeding experience. They have undertaken further training to become volunteer breastfeeding supporters. This peer support is offered to complement the care given by healthcare professionals.



For further information contact Marion McPhillips, Co-ordinator of the Breastfeeding Initiative, Gorbals Health Centre, 45 Pine Place, Glasgow, G5 0BQ, or call on 0141 531 8227.

You can't get fitter than a breastfed nipper

Also see back page for Breastfeeding awareness week dates!



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April

17 Food for Fife brainstorming morning at Craigencaft Farm, Kinghorn, Fife 9-12.30. Contact Nick Wilding by e-mail wecan@energise.org for more details.

30 Community Food Growing in Scotland conference call Debbie at the SCDP for a booking form and see details on page 3.

May

8 Wholesome, appealing, balanced: the challenge of the national minimum standards in care homes for older people is a conference hosted by the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health at Stationers' Hall, London call 0207 630 0121 for details.

14 A selection of national and international nutritional issues are to be presented at the next meeting of the Scottish Community Nutrition Group of the British Dietetic Association. For more information call Elaine Jocelyn on 0141 889 8701. This event is also open to non- members.

12-18 Breastfeeding awareness week run by the Special Projects Programme, HEBS for more information call 0131 536 5500 or click on www.hebs.com

24 Children Families and Food seminar held at Old College, University of Edinburgh 9.30am - 2.30pm, speakers include Gillian Kynoch, Scotland's Food and Health Co-ordinator . Free places for unwaged and students are available. Details at www.crfr.ac.uk or call 0131 651 1832.

June

20 -23 Sadly due to foot and mouth the 2001 Royal Highland Show was cancelled but this year it is back! For more information about the 42nd show to be staged at the permanent site at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh call 0131 335 6200 or e-mail info@rhass.org.uk

1-30 Weight wise month run by the British Dietetic Association for more information call 0121 200 8080 or click on www.bda.uk.com

Let Fare Choice know about the events you are organising!

Concerned as a consumer?

The Scottish Consumer Council are looking for volunteers, individuals and groups, of all ages and from all walks of life with an interest in their community.

People willing to talk about local consumer issues, from health to the environment, transport to education, and to contribute to an ongoing research programme.

For details about how you can join the Scottish Consumer Council Consumer Network get in touch with:

Fiona Robertson the co-ordinator
on 0141 227 6453

or e-mail

frobertson@scotconsumer.org.uk

The views expressed in Fare Choice are not necessarily those of the Scottish Community Diet Project unless specifically stated.



**The Scottish Community Diet Project:
Supporting local communities tackling inequalities in diet and health.**

How to get in contact with the Scottish Community Diet Project

The SCDP team are: Bill Gray National Project Officer, Lucy Gillie Development Officer, Lizanne Hume Development Officer and Debbie Cameron Project Administrator. SCDP c/o SCC, Royal Exchange House, 100 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3DN Tel: 0141 226 5261 Fax: 0141 221 0731 E-mail: dcameron@scotconsumer.org.uk Reports, back issues of the newsletter, toolkits, information about the project and other useful links are available on the SCDP website www.dietproject.org.uk