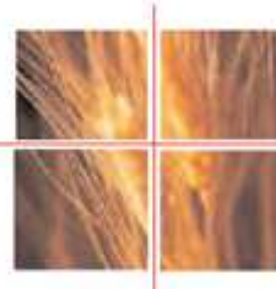




PRESS RELEASE



August 2006

Sainsbury's Brand Head Highlights Traceability Issue

Judith Batchelar, Brand Director at Sainsbury's, has spoken out about the importance of traceability and tight controls needed along the supply chain, backing the work of Assured UK Malt (AUKM). This comes at a time where legal obligations and food safety compliance has never been tighter, with retailers and consumers having to place all their confidence in a company's brand.

Judith comments: "Numerous food safety incidents from dioxin in animal feed to illegal colourants in spices, have demonstrated the vital role traceability systems have to play in demonstrating the integrity of ingredient supply chains. Our customers' legitimate expectation is that our suppliers and we have a precise knowledge of the provenance of our products and the ingredients they contain, and just as importantly, the standards prevailing throughout the supply chain."

Judith adds: "Sainsbury's strongly supports industry initiatives that improve operating standards whilst avoiding unnecessary duplication of activity. We applaud the AUKM programme and wish it every success."

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Brand equity and brand protection is of the utmost importance to Judith through her role as Brand Director at Sainsbury's. She is aware that retailers, brewers and distillers have invested heavily in building and maintaining brand equity and they need to ensure their brands remain strong and can be trusted by consumers.

The AUKM scheme brings considerable benefits to brewers, distillers, retailers and ultimately the consumer alike. The UK malting industry leads the world in having an assurance scheme accredited by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) for malt. AUKM covers all aspects of the production chain, is independently audited, and meets the high standards set by the International Accreditation Forum.

The standard requires that all grain is traceable from farm to the primary storage area, and from stored bulk to final delivery as malt. It helps ensure that the retailer can rely on the brewer or distiller to provide them with a fully assured and traceable product, instilling confidence that their brand is being protected.

Few people in the food and drink industry can have failed to notice the growing importance of traceability in recent years. The problem faced by food and drink manufacturers and retailers is their total dependence on outside suppliers to ensure the integrity of their products and brands.

Even the world's biggest brands are not immune from the consequences of product concerns, as highlighted by the recent product recall at the Cadbury Marlbrook plant in Herefordshire. This incident forced retailers and manufacturers to take numerous lines off the shelves, resulting in costly product recalls and consumer concern, not to mention any possible resulting effect on brand equity and future sales.

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Food scares have prompted manufacturers and retailers to continue to demand traceability from their suppliers. Judith adds: “Now given statutory weight under Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, responsible retailers have always demanded that their suppliers maintain ingredient traceability and that the control exercised at all critical stages back to primary source can be demonstrated.”

Ivor Murrell, a spokesperson for the Maltsters Association of Great Britain adds: “Members of the AUKM Scheme build on the MAGB HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) Protocol. This sets out the requirements on food safety, product legality, good operational practice and hence assists product quality. Furthermore, the 25,000 strong network of farms in assurance schemes provides AUKM with an excellent foundation on which to build. This gives manufacturers, retailers and consumers total confidence that every stage in the production process is recorded.”

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Notes for Editor

Members of the AUKM scheme are Bairds Malt Limited, Coors Brewers Ltd, Crisp Malting Group Ltd, Greencore Malt, Muntons plc, and Simpsons Malt Limited.

More information on the scheme can be found at www.assuredukmalt.com or by calling The Maltsters’ Association of Great Britain on 01636 700781.

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