



Recommended suppliers and stores get an annual certificate and can display a logo specific to their region

Slow Food rolls out national 'recommendation' scheme

By MICK WHITWORTH

Slow Food UK says a recommendation scheme to highlight producers and stores that match its "good, clean and fair" food philosophy could soon be operating nationally.

The scheme has already been trialled by Slow Food's Worcestershire, Ludlow and Edinburgh groups and the 52 other local and regional groups are being encouraged to adopt the same system.

It means delis and farm shops that impress local Slow Food members through their support for producers and communities could be listed on their nearest group's website and leaflets, and display a logo saying they are recommended by the local group.

Similarly, producers that make great tasting, fairly priced food with strong environmental and animal welfare credentials could be listed too.

In Worcestershire, recommended businesses currently include Teme Valley Brewery, Barbourne Cider & Perry and the EcoCafé at The Fold, a sustainable living centre near Bransford.

Although Slow Food UK is encouraging all British groups to use similar criteria, chief executive Catherine Gazzoli told *FFD* decisions about which businesses

deserved recognition would be left entirely to the local groups. She also stressed this was not a formal accreditation scheme, like Soil Association organic accreditation. There were no fees involved, and producers or shops who joined their local Slow Food group would not automatically be recommended.

There was no question of letting food and drink producers use the organisation's 'snail' logo on their packaging, she added.

Sue Braithwaite, co-leader of the Worcester group, said the criteria for recommending producers were similar to those used to choose participants in Salone del Gusto, the bi-annual Slow Food showcase in the movement's home country of Italy. "It has to taste good – that's the first thing," she told *FFD*. "It has to be clean from an environmental point of view – for example, are animals outdoor reared? And it has to be sold at a price that gives a fair recompense for the producer and is also sustainable."

But Gazzoli said Slow Food would not be "overly precious" about the criteria. A deli or farm shop might be recommended if it was seen to support local producers, but would not be expected to stock 100% British products.

SLOW FOOD UPDATE

- The number of local groups in the UK has risen to 55, with Whitstable in Kent and the Channel Isle of Guernsey among the latest to form. The groups are also known as 'convivia', but chief executive Catherine Gazzoli wants to drop this and other esoteric Slow Food terminology to widen its appeal.
- Gazzoli also told *FFD* she has not ruled out partnering with a major supermarket to spread the Slow Food message. But it would have to be a chain that shared similar values, she added.
- With three commercial sponsors – Italy's Lavazza coffee, The Balvenie single malt Scotch and the Grana Padano cheese consortium – now funding Slow Food UK's head office operations, Gazzoli has focused on finding "philanthropic sources" and charitable institutions to fund specific educational projects. Last year there was criticism from some members when, following a funding crisis, Slow Food was reconstituted with a new board and only one main banker, the entrepreneur Peter Kindersley. Gazzoli says there are now different seven sources of funding in place.
- The extra cash will allow new projects to be launched during 2010 including a Slow Food Baby educational programme to help parents of pre-school children find out about nutritious local produced food.

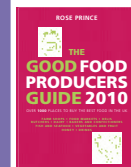
A Farm Foodhall will form part of a £12m Dobbies Garden World at Lisburn, Co. Antrim, after planners approved the development by the Tesco-owned chain.

● Hambledon Herbs, Carley's of Cornwall and Bramley & Gage are among the specialist producers taking part in Natural & Organic Products Europe 2010 at London's Olympia on April 11-12. They will form part of a new West Country Organic Pavilion, joining a total of 500 exhibitors at the show.

Waitrose was confirmed as Britain's fastest-growing supermarket chain last month, with sales (excluding petrol) up 15.1 per cent in the six months to January 30. It has also overtaken Marks & Spencer in food sales for the first time.

● Carluccio's franchised Italian-style restaurant and deli in Dublin has closed, putting 60 jobs at risk, after the operator failed to strike a deal with landlords to reduce the rent. Carluccio's said the rent on the Dawson St site had been struck near the peak of the property boom in 2007, before the collapse of the Irish economy.

A new website – www.honestlabelling.com – has been launched to expose food producers that are misleading consumers about the origin and provenance of their products.



● Over 1,000 of the "best food outlets in the UK" are listed in *The Good Food Producers Guide 2010* (Hardie Grant, £14.99), published this month. Written by *Daily Telegraph* food columnist Rose Prince,

it's described as "a celebration of the most delicious food to be found in farm shops, delis, street markets and direct from individual producers". All the outlets featured are Prince's personal recommendations – shops and producers can't buy a listing in the guide.

New research from IGD forecasts that Brits will spend £7.2bn on food and grocery shopping online by 2014 – nearly double the figure for 2009. Last year, 13% of adults shopped online for groceries – an increase of 63% on 2006.