

# letters

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## Not all gloom and doom for organic

**Sir,** As a counterweight to the ongoing gloomy stories on the decline of organic sales, we would like to offer our own experience.

Our Honeyrose brand has seen sales surge 78% this quarter vs the same quarter in 2009. In the past six months we have added more new business, including launching lines in Sainsbury's, and are adding capacity as fast as we can.

While 2009 was a very challenging year – companies faltered and some failed – we were able to consolidate our business through the asset acquisition of one of our competitors (which was not selling organic).

We also felt the recession, but ended with the best fourth-quarter in our 10-year history.

When consumers' spending power returns, as we believe is happening now, companies that have stuck to quality over taking easy shortcuts will stand stronger. We believe the consumer will reward us for sticking to our values in the hard times as well. The future for organic quality cakes, from our viewpoint, looks bright.

**Lise Madsen, MD and founder, Honeyrose Bakery**

## Factory farming must be stopped

**Sir,** The livestock industry's contribution to climate change, as reported in the UN study, is 18% of global greenhouse gases (Localised Bill is 'unhelpful' to emissions debate, *The Grocer*, 3 April).

Questions about comparing the sector's impact with global trans-

### LETTER OF THE WEEK

## Ben & Jerry's: why so serious?

● **Sir,** Is it my imagination or is Ben & Jerry's becoming an increasingly one-dimensional ice cream proposition these days, with its Fairtrade fixation?

Traditionally, the slightly eccentric opposition to Håagen-Dazs' 'We still live in the 70's with our ponderous packaging and wearisome romantic ads' could be relied on for a bit of fun along the way.

Perhaps it has spent too long on the shelf next to its General Mills mate or is struggling with its sector-leading stewardship.

But unlike brands such as innocent, which has stayed true to first principles despite an increasingly influential cake

stakeholding, Ben & Jerry's appears to have lost its light-hearted aura.

As it happens, I am a big Fairtrade fan, but let us not lose sight of just how many sea and air miles are employed in the chase for such

cherished ingredients. Let us also remember that neither of these ice cream giants are produced in the UK and – in these troubled times – wouldn't it be lovely to embrace a fun, indulgent, locally produced brand that focused on bold thought-provoking flavours as opposed to taking itself quite so seriously.

Ice cream, after all, should always be about fun!

**Ian Hills, Purple Picard (marketing agency) and former of Ben & Jerry's**

# Honeyrose organic handbaking

port are based on a positive estimation of transport's emissions, not on the total stockpile of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

The Sustainability Centre

calls on the government to tackle the environmental and social impacts of livestock production and consumption across the world. It's not just climate-changing emissions – our reliance on imported animal feed and meat is wiping out rainforests, wildlife and local communities in South America. The current system is also failing UK farmers, many of whom have been pushed to the brink by an unfair system.

Whichever government comes to power after the election must lead the move away from damaging factory farming.

**Kirtana Chandrasekaran, food campaigner, Friends of the Earth**

**Sir,** The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association claims the recent tobacco tax rises will increase smuggling (Letters, 27 March).

However, evidence from the UK does not support this. Over the past decade, the market share of illegal cigarettes has fallen from a peak of about 21% in the late 1990s to 12% (mid-point of estimate range) in 2007-08 (not 24% as claimed by the TMA). Meanwhile tobacco taxes have continued to rise at least in line with inflation.

Perhaps the real reason for the TMA's concern is that tax rises lower consumption and hence profits for the industry.

**Amanda Sandford, research manager, ASH**

## Tale of a village shopkeeper

**Sir,** A few words from a humble village grocer: how times have changed!

Long gone are the days when the shopping choice was the Derby Co-op or the Derby Co-op. Days when nippers no more than 11 years of age could take a shopping basket to school along with money and ration books, dawdle to the Co-op then dawdle home, a round trip of three miles.

When mothers were the priceless task, but the fathers while dad put out at work, long things for the and especially selling down the road.

My parents would to codeger behind the counter has seen me living in Canada, South Africa and

the 1960s. I started this

Great Britain". We made enough for us, as

factured in the high to ex-

On each return we noticed

changes bit by bit. First came Fine

Fare (self-serve it was called, the term supermarket not yet in vogue).

As our industries disappeared, the corner shops disappeared, and the out-of-town shopping monsters have flourished. You need a car to do your shopping and a trolley when you walk the seeming miles of shelves.

We plan to retire this year and, with no purchaser on the horizon, our village shop will become a non-descript house. Ironically, our nearest shop will be a Co-op, a round trip of three miles.

**Michael Rigley, The Village Stores, Wellingborough**

### FROM THEGROCER.CO.UK

#### FIVE MOST READ

1. Bond to step aside as Asda chief executive
2. Asda eyes bid for Argos owner Home Retail Group
3. Kraft backs Cadbury café plan
4. Tesco is England's official World Cup supermarket
5. Coca-Cola ups its stake in Innocent to 58%

#### YOUR COMMENTS

**"Cafés are an interesting idea but will Cadbury be selling Fairtrade drinks now it's owned by Kraft? It's a great opportunity to make an ethical drinks outlet"**

Anonymous

#### LAST WEEK'S POLL

MPs want to cover up risqué lads' mags on shop shelves to protect the innocence of young shoppers.

Are lads' mags just a bit of fun, are they disgraceful filth – or should MPs be worrying about bigger things?

FILTH 22% FUN 11% WHOCARES? 67%

#### THIS WEEK'S POLL

Andy Bond this week caught the trade on the hop with the news of his surprise exit from Asda.

What will be the most lasting legacy of his tenure?

- He made Asda world-class
- He made being ginger look cool
- Tesco are further ahead than ever