



Annual Report 2009

The Organix Foundation
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Introduction



What is the Organix Foundation for?

Our aim is to improve the quality and safety of the food that British children eat

The Organix Foundation (OF) is a registered charity and grant-giving body. OF is funded by annual contributions from the profits of the Organix company, an organic children's food company based in Christchurch, Dorset, plus continuing donations by Lizzie Vann, the founder and former owner of Organix.

What do we fund?

The OF makes grants of up to £40,000 for:

Research

We fund research into ways that food and drink impact on children's health. We fund research on:

- Eating habits and food and drink choices
- Additives in food
- Pesticide residues on food

Action

We fund projects that give help and information to parents and carers about nutrition, food and health. We also support projects that help children understand more about their food and how to eat well.

We fund campaigners who want to highlight existing research into the links between the diet of children and their health, and ensure that it is put into better use at national, local and community level.

Special bursaries

Every year, we also fund:

Organix Foundation studentships:

grants of up to £5,000 each to fund a small piece of original research by post graduate students from an accredited nutrition course, on a subject relevant to children's food, drink and health.

Nursery kitchens and gardens: Grants totalling up to £5,000 per annum to fund child care centres with projects that put good nutrition into practice.

What are we looking for?

The trustees of the Organix Foundation are looking for the following in the applications they receive:

Research should show an intention to produce evidence of the links between food quality, nutrition and children's health. Research can be within any academic field. It should have relevance to parents, carers and/or campaigners for better children's food across the UK.

Health promotion projects should be firmly rooted in scientific evidence about healthy eating. They should have a positive focus, helping people to eat well in a practical and sustainable way and should either cover the whole of the UK, or be scalable to the national level in future.

Bursaries will be awarded to student research projects which are relevant to the goals of the foundation, i.e. which relate to food quality and/or food policy. OF are happy to consider proposals to extend projects already started as part of a students course, as well as proposals for stand-alone work, for primary research or reviews of existing evidence.

Nursery kitchens: OF are looking for clear, costed, projects that will improve the food eaten by the children attending nurseries. OF will only fund improvements that would not be made otherwise, and will favour applications from state nurseries.

How to apply

To obtain full details of our criteria, please download an application form from our website.

www.organixfoundation.org



Food Commission Action on Additives Campaign



Action on additives

For more information on this campaign see the website www.actiononadditives.com

Why did we fund this?

The role of food colours on activity and attention in children has long been debated. A study in the Isle of Wight in 2002 renewed calls for more evidence to be collected in this area and a more detailed survey funded by The Food Standards Agency and carried out by the University of Southampton was published in 2007. The results of this study gave a clear indication that six food colours (and the preservative sodium benzoate) caused behaviour changes in some children. Despite a statement from the Committee on Toxicity highlighting these findings in June 2007, practical response from Government was slow and the Action on Additives (AoA) campaign started in November 2007 with funding from the OF to campaign for the removal of these additives from the food supply.

What has been achieved?

AoA created a campaign website with information on over 1000 foods that contained the food colours. The campaign has ensured that the issue is kept in the public eye as well as providing parents with information on how to avoid these food colours in the food they give their children. Since we started work there have been two major policy developments that the campaign has been directly involved in.

1. In April 2008 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced a 'voluntary ban' on E102, E104, E110, E124, E122 and E129 in foods with the intention that manufacturers should phase out the use of these six colours by the end of 2009.

2. In July 2008 The European Parliament voted in favour of labelling foods containing the six food colours with the words "may

have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children."

Why do we need to continue funding the campaign?

The complete removal of the six Southampton colours from all packaged food sold in the UK is by no means secure. The Europe wide warning labels will not appear on products until the end of 2010 and it may be difficult for parents to access this information on many labels. In December 2008, the FSA finally answered the question of how it intended to 'police' the voluntary ban by announcing that it would publish information on its website on brands and companies that have removed the colours from some of their products. The information will not be obtained by surveying the market, but by inviting companies to submit details of colour free products. The list will do nothing to draw attention to those companies that steadfastly refuse to reformulate and will have little or no effect on companies based outside the UK (who made up a significant minority of manufacturers of confectionary with the colourings). In addition there has been no action whatsoever taken on the seventh Southampton additive, Sodium Benzoate (E211), despite the FSA's pledge to revisit the topic.

What is happening in 2009?

- AoA is maintaining the campaign profile through press activity, articles, expansion onto online network sites, attendance at FSA stakeholder meetings, links with European campaigning organisations and through work with parents, families and schools.
- It is monitoring progress, and highlighting company misinformation around the voluntary ban on the six colours, through the maintenance of the online database and website. The intention is to collect at least 3,000 products with the colours and to collect data on foods provided by caterers.
- It is campaigning for further research to support a coherent policy on artificial colourings, and the preservative sodium benzoate



University of Teesside work on the fluoride composition of baby foods and drinks



In 2008/9 OF funded a research project to determine the fluoride content of infant food and drinks in the UK. It was conducted by the School of Public Health & Social Care, University of Teesside and The School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle University, by Dr Vida Zohoori, and Dr Paula Moynihan.

Why did OF fund this project?

Health professionals suspect that fluoride can cause a health problem both when there is not enough present in the diet, and when there is too much. But there was no recent information about the fluoride content of commercial baby food and infant formula that would allow estimation of the fluoride intakes of infants and children in different parts of the UK.

What did they do?

The fluoride content of 200 foods and drinks was analysed. For those foods and drinks that required the addition of water this was done using ionised (no fluoride) water and water from fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas.

What did they find?

There was considerable variation in the fluoride content of infant foods and drinks available in the UK, and intakes among infants will vary depending both on food choice as well as the level of fluoridation where they live. This data will allow estimations of fluoride intakes among different population groups to see whether intakes are adequate and within safe limits. It was presented to an international dental conference in Budapest, and has been published in the dental journal 'Caries Research' in 2009.

What is happening now?

The research team are extending their work with a second grant from the foundation. They will be looking at the actual fluoride intake of two groups of children – one resident in a fluoridated area, and the other in a non-fluoridated area.

OF Pesticide Projects



Two projects looking at the safety of Pesticides

University of Ulster

The Bioimaging Research Group at the Centre for Molecular Bioscience, University of Ulster, is renowned for its detailed work on cell development. The research funded by the OF is studying the effect at cell level of some of the more widely used endocrine-disrupting pesticides such as vinclozolin and chlorpyrifos. The impact of their effects on fetal tissue formation is being studied in a mouse model. Funding is also being used to build a database of published literature linking developmental period exposure to pesticides and cancer induction.

The team is being led by Professor C. Vyvyan Howard. Head of the Bioimaging Research Group, and Member of the UK Advisory Committee on Pesticides. Professor Howard is working with Professor Ana Soto, Professor of Cancer Development and Professor Stephen Downes, Head of the Cancer and Ageing Research Group and Director, all at the Biomedical Sciences Research Institute at the University of Ulster.

A postdoctoral Research Assistant, Lizzie Walker, is working full time on the project, which is expected to last for three years running from 2008 to 2011.

The research findings hope to be published in peer reviewed scientific journals in 2011.

Pesticide Action Network

Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) promotes healthy food, agriculture and an environment which will provide food and meet public health needs without dependence on toxic chemicals, and without harm to food producers and agricultural workers. It is an independent, non-profit organisation, working nationally and internationally with like-minded groups and individuals concerned with health, environment and development. Their aim is to:

- Eliminate the hazards of pesticides
- Reduce dependence on pesticides and prevent unnecessary expansion of their use
- Increase the sustainable and ecological alternatives to chemical pest control.

Together with the UK organic food and farming charity the Soil Association, PAN has been funded by the OF to produce a report that aims to:

a. explain to the general public why the current system of pesticide regulation is not working, and to develop messages and recommend action that the public, especially parents concerned about children's intake of pesticide residues, can take to achieve change;

b. make recommendations for a change in the system of pesticide regulation in the UK, which currently fails to take into account the growing scientific evidence of uncertainty and heightened risk, especially for babies, children and unborn children. These groups are at particular risk from a pesticide regulatory system that does not take into account their specific vulnerabilities when calculating "safe" levels of pesticides in food.

PAN UK and the Soil Association are reviewing a range of emerging scientific studies (including some social science) which emphasise the extent to which regulatory regimes such as pesticide risk assessments are political rather than scientific structures.

The report is expected to be published later in 2009.



Food Flavourings

In 2008 the OF funded the beginning of a major study into the background and safety of food flavourings.

Stage one was a grant to the Food Commission, a UK charity, to evaluate the legislative approval processes, usage and safety of flavourings in children's foods, drinks and medicines.

At the end of that stage, the Food Commission produced a draft report which appraised the safety of food flavourings from a public interest point of view, with special emphasis on children's health.

The report summarised available evidence on EU legislation, safety data, sales data, industry usage data and consumer exposure data relating to the use of flavourings in food and drink, with particular reference to flavourings in children's products.

Why did OF fund this research?

Flavourings are largely cosmetic additives with no nutritive value of their own, used in processed foods to increase the taste or replace flavours lost during processing. They can also be used to mask unpleasant flavours caused by other ingredients or additives.

Little is known about the use of flavourings in food, including how much people may be eating. The type and amount of flavouring does not need to be declared on food labels. Hundreds of new flavouring substances are developed and marketed by the industry each year and the source of these is not known by consumers. The process of safety assessment is not always transparent and relationship between the manufacturers of flavourings and the safety testing of these chemicals lacks clarity.

Why does the use of flavourings in children's food need to be examined?

1. Flavourings may have possible direct health effects on children, both on an immediate and long term basis. It is known that in their pure, concentrated form some flavourings can be detrimental to health, but toxicology levels are rarely set for lower levels of exposure through food. Since children consume more food per kilogram of body weight than adults, they are more exposed to chemical hazards in food than are adults. Infants consume twice the amount of food per unit of body weight compared to adults. Safety testing should ensure that flavourings are safe for consumption by both adults and children.

2. It is also possible that repeated exposure to the strong flavourings typically used in children's foods may negatively affect their reactions to the taste of fresh, unprocessed foods, which could taste bland and dull when compared to highly flavoured processed foods. This could have a direct effect on their long term nutritional health.

3. The lack of clear labelling of flavourings on foods and drinks denies consumers the right to know what all the food ingredients are and to avoid food ingredients from certain sources if they wish.

What happens next?

Following on from the draft evidence report the OF is funding the Food Commission to convene an Expert Working Party to look at all the evidence relating flavourings to health and to look at how flavourings are currently regulated and monitored in the EU. The Expert Working Party is made up of a food law specialist, a toxicology expert, a campaigner, a public health nutritionist and experts in science and technology, with observers from Government. The report produced will provide a definitive guide to flavourings in food, look at where further research evidence is required and make recommendations on how consumers can be better informed and protected. The Expert Report is due to be published in 2010.

Photo Resources

In 2009 the OF funded the production of a photo resource which shows the type of foods and drinks, and amounts, that children need to meet their nutrient requirements.

We gave a grant to The Caroline Walker Trust, a UK Charity to compile menu plans and prepare photographs of typical meals and snacks for children

- under the age of 5 years,
- from 5-11 years
- from 12-18 years.

The Caroline Walker Trust is a charity that provides expert advice and practical recommendations to help vulnerable populations to eat well. CWT has produced resources to support those who work with under 5's in childcare as well as for looked after children and children with learning disabilities. These new resources will support all this work.

Why did OF fund this research?

There is no resource for use in the UK which provides visual examples of appropriate food portion sizes for children. There is also a lack of awareness among many support workers, and children and families, about what some foods that are suggested as a useful part of a healthy diet look like and how things should be served. A visual guide to food types and portions allows support workers and families to familiarise themselves with meals and snacks that are good choices for children and provides pictures for children so that they can look at and choose different types of foods to try themselves. The resources will be of particular use in child care settings.

What happens next?

The first set of resources which are aimed at all those who help children under 5 to eat well will be piloted in August/September 2009, and once feedback from the pilots has been taken into consideration the resource will be made available across the UK.

The resources for children 5-11 years and 12-18 years will be completed ready for piloting in September/October, and will be available by the end of 2009.

Details of the resources and when they are available can be found on www.cwt.org.uk.



An investigation into the background and safety of food flavourings



Organix Foundation studentships:

Grants of up to £5,000 each to fund a small piece of original research by post graduate students from an accredited nutrition course, on a subject relevant to childrens' food, drink and health.

In 2008 the OF funded Louise Lloyd to look at the link between childhood obesity and adult health risks.



Example of a Student Grant

Graduate studentship award: 2008

Graduate: Louise Lloyd BSc (Hons)
Nutrition, ANutr

Supervisors: Dr Sarah McMullen &
Professor Simon Langley-Evans

Institution: Division of Nutritional
Sciences, School of Biosciences, University
of Nottingham, Sutton Bonington Campus,
Loughborough, LE12 5RD.

What did I do?

I used the Organix Studentship to produce a systematic review to answer the question: Does childhood obesity exert an independent effect on adult cardiovascular risk?

What did I find?

I found that there is currently little evidence to suggest that childhood obesity is an independent risk factor for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) risk. Maintaining a normal weight during childhood is important due to its tendency to track into adulthood, rather than due to additional effects on CVD risk factors. There is some evidence that the thinnest children who become overweight as adults have increased risk of blood pressure, so public health initiatives should focus on encouraging the maintenance of weight within normal ranges, not just targeting children who are obese.

How did the studentship help me in my career as a nutritionist?

I found the studentship to be a very positive, stimulating and rewarding experience, and an invaluable way of bridging the gap between undergraduate and postgraduate studies. I am now undertaking a nutrition-related PhD research studentship at the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science at the University of Nottingham. The skills gained during my Organix graduate studentship will be very valuable to the progression of my PhD studies, particularly in terms of reviewing the wider background literature to my subject area and in preparing my data for my thesis and publications.



Nursery kitchens and gardens

Grants totalling up to £5,000 per annum to fund child care centres with projects that put good nutrition into practice.

In 2008 the OF funded the creation of a garden for a nursery in Walthamstow, east London.

Example of a Nursery Grant

Penrhyn Nursery

OF gave a small grant to the Penrhyn Children's Centre to fund the purchase of a greenhouse and polytunnel, a wormery, and tools (including children's tools) and seeds. The nursery team planned to develop an organic growing area to supply the kitchen and provide practical lessons for the children about the way that food is grown.

Why did we fund this project?

OF decided it would be useful to finance a small project to see the impact it had on the lives of the children taking part.

How did the project develop?

At the beginning of the project, the foundation supplied books on nutrition, with eating plans for early years, from the Caroline Walker Trust. These were used to help the nursery team improve their menus, and also plan the garden.

The vegetable plot was created with the help of the older children, and a deck was built around it. The children began to spend their lunch and tea times outside, as well as spending time helping to prepare the garden and grow the fruits and vegetables. Babies spend time on the deck watching the trees, and the children spend time there reading and doing other activities.

They have grown tomatoes, marrows, squash, carrots, onions, pumpkins, potatoes, leeks and cabbages. Alison Robinson, the Childcare Co-ordinator, reports that 'The children have really enjoyed growing their own produce and following the journey of the Marrow (although we really did need more sun!). It's the first time that we have grown anything so we were all so proud of ourselves.'

The Organix Trustees



Lizzie Vann MBE

Lizzie Vann MBE

Lizzie Vann is the founder of the children's food company Organix. Motivated by her own experience of the links between food quality and human health, she has worked for thirty years to raise the quality standards of foods fed to children.

Organix, a company that produces high quality organic foods for babies and children, devotes a proportion of its profits each year to the Organix Foundation. Since leaving the company in 2008, Lizzie has continued to campaign on children's health issues and to fund, alongside the Hero Group, The Organix Foundation.

Ella Heeks

Ella is passionate about business and its' power to change the world for the better. Something she successfully achieved when she helped shape Abel & Cole to become Britain's leading organic home delivery company - a business that sells organic food which gives British farmers a fair deal, reduces packaging waste and food miles and connects its customers with seasonal produce.

Today, Ella is sharing her experience by delivering speeches and providing advice. Most recently, she delivered an interactive session at the Leaders Serving People conference in London, helping CEOs produce practical plans to put people and ethics at the hearts of their organisations. Ella also spoke recently at Said Business School in Oxford about green business opportunities. She is also working with several entrepreneurs, helping them to get green and ethical companies off the ground and fulfill their potential.

Dr Helen Crawley

Helen is a Registered Public Health Nutritionist and Dietitian with 25 years experience in applied human nutrition, health related research, policy development and teaching. Helen is currently Reader in Food & Nutrition Policy at the Centre for

Food Policy at City University in London and Science Director of the public health nutrition charity The Caroline Walker Trust (CWT).

As Science Director of the CWT, Helen has researched and written nutritional and practical guidelines for older people, older people with dementia, school aged children, looked-after children, children under 5 in child care and children and adults with learning disabilities.

The Caroline Walker Trust campaigns for better quality of food in public settings and better training for those who provide food for vulnerable groups in the UK.

Helen was a member of the Government's school meal review panel.

Diana Hawdon

Diana is a registered Dietitian and Public Health Nutritionist with over 30 years experience in food related subjects including Nutritional Research and Community Health Development.

Previously Diana has worked within London communities, engaging with local people young and old, setting up nutrition projects and initiatives. Diana has great interest in giving people the knowledge, skills and confidence to help improve their health through good nutritional knowledge and application. Diana has worked extensively with infants and children in a variety of settings and has research interests in weaning practices in multi-ethnic communities and oral health issues among pre-school children.

Diana is currently working with schools, the local authority and caterers to ensure food in schools meets government legislation and to encourage more children to eat and enjoy a school lunch. This work includes delivering nutrition interventions to tackle childhood obesity and supporting the healthy eating strand of the Healthy Schools Programme.



Ella Heeks



Dr Helen Crawley



Diana Hawdon

How to contact us

Helen Cookson is the manager of the Organix Foundation. She can advise on the suitability of projects for OF funding, and is the point of contact for grants as they make progress. Helen can be contacted by email at helen.cookson@organix.com and by telephone at 01202 479 701.