

## ***Health Action Campaign's response to the government's proposed Industrial Strategy***

### **Q: How can the government and industry collaborate to enable growth in new sectors of the future that emerge around new technologies and new business models?**

A: If the aim is to cultivate world leading sectors, then the Industrial Strategy should include the UK's largest manufacturing industry i.e. the food industry - rather than leaving this for a Food Farming and Fisheries Plan which seems likely to concentrate on agriculture and fisheries.

There is an opportunity here to help make a success of Brexit while improving public health and reducing pressure on the NHS. That's because we know:

- Healthier food isn't just good for the nation's health, it's good for business too. Both consumer research and sales figures point in the same direction. Healthier food is the way forward, with increasingly health conscious consumers proving to be the most lucrative customers, with the greatest lifetime value for the food industry.
- The significant rise in levels of obesity across the developed world (in both children and adults) is a major public health challenge. This means that producing healthier food that helps tackle obesity is now a global business opportunity – just the kind of opportunity the UK needs to help make a success of Brexit.

The good news is that the building blocks are already in place for the UK food industry to become a world leader in the production, sale and marketing of healthier food – at each stage from food supply and processing through retail to out of home catering.

Evidence that healthier food is good for business comes from a range of sources. This includes consumer research organisations like Kantar World Panel, Leatherhead Food Research and Nielsen. It also comes from sales figures. For example 99% of sales growth in American Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (HWCF) company members now comes from lower calorie products – which now constitute a majority of sales for these companies. While in the UK dunnhumby, who track supermarket sales, report that more health-conscious consumers spend more.

UK food companies have the expertise to make a commercial success of healthier food - including expertise in consumer research, market testing, product reformulation, portion size development and advertising. They also have access to corporation tax relief for R & D and to world class universities – as when Marks & Spencer developed the 'Fuller Longer' range, with input from researchers at Aberdeen University.

By healthier food we mean food with less sugar, salt and saturated fat and more dietary fibre – which fortunately (together with vegetables, fruit and pulses) is the kind of food best able to limit weight gain and protect health in both children and adults.

Importantly, emerging developments in food processing technology now enable a more rapid move to lower levels of sugar, salt and fat. For example, flavour delivery particles for sugar and salt microspheres provide the same sugar and salt taste that consumers are used to but with less sugar and salt and without using artificial alternatives.

A fuller explanation of the business potential of mass producing healthier food and of its feasibility is available in sections 14 and 15 of our attached report, *Healthy and Wealthy?*

We hope the government will recognise that a strategy to achieve world leadership in the mass production of healthier food will be good for the nation's health, good for the food industry and good for our economic prospects post Brexit.