

++ NPD PREDICTS A TOUGH YEAR FOR THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Rising unemployment, eroding consumer confidence, market volatility and other economic concerns will take a toll on the restaurant industry in 2009, according to a new report from The NPD Group, a leading market research company. Total restaurant industry traffic was down one percent at the end of 2008, and NPD forecasts in its new report that 2009 will be an even tougher year for restaurants.

The new report, entitled "Challenging Times...Driving Sales in 2009", takes a deep dive into what happened to the restaurant industry last year, what worked and what didn't; and how the lessons learned from last year and previous industry downturns can help improve sales in 2009. In addition, the report provides a sales and traffic forecast for 2009 by the industry segment and offers considerations for restaurant operators on how to survive and adapt to the challenges of 2009.

According to NPD CREST® data, the restaurant industry started 2008 on a positive note from a traffic standpoint; however, visits to restaurants began to slow mid-year and turned to a negative in three of the last four months of the year. Total restaurant industry traffic was flat for the year.

www.npd.com +++

++ ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS NEW CANADIAN ORGANIC REGULATIONS

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) in Canada is pleased to see the significantly amended Organic Products Regulations (OPR) published in today's Canada Gazette (Part I). Following a public comment period, the new regulations are set to come into effect on June 30, 2009. The OPR will ensure organic labeling on food products will be enforced and protected by the government, aligning Canada with its major trading partners and providing consumers with confidence in national standards in this rapidly expanding market. Canada's organic food market is conservatively estimated at close to

\$2 billion (Canadian) in annual sales, and has seen more than 20% annual growth for many years. The new regulations provide clarity on what products are covered by the current regulations, as well as a new organic logo.

The new regulations also provide detailed provisions on organic imports and exports, including a possible equivalency agreement with Canada's major trading partners such as the United States and Europe.

OTA is the membership-based business association for the organic industry in North America, with affiliate offices in Canada and the United States. www.ota.com +++

++ SPOONER INDUSTRIES RAISES MORE THAN A LAUGH

Over £315 was raised by the employees at Spooner Industries head office in West Yorkshire, UK, in support of Comic Relief as they took time out to celebrate Red Nose Day, Friday 13th March. A raft of fun and fund raising activities included fancy dress competitions, cake baking, games and comedy quizzes took place as the staff got in the mood to do something funny for money. But the highlight of the day was when two of the directors were put in the stocks for a soaking by staff throwing wet sponges.

In the run up to Red Nose Day, employees had been asked to vote for the director they would most like to see soaked by putting donations in nominated jars. Sales and marketing director, Steve Newell, was the clear favorite, with over £169 in his jar, but gallant managing director, Mike Brook, who came a poor second with only £36, offered to join Steve in the stocks for an extra £25 collection from the crowd.

Spooner Industries offers unrivalled experience in the design, manufacture, installation and after-sales service of food processing equipment including ovens, coolers, proofers and toasters.

www.spooner.co.uk +++

++ NEW CODE OF PRACTICE

Campden BRI has published a guide that shall assist manufacturers with the safe production of vacuum packaged and modified atmosphere pack-

aged food products. It is an essential reference document for anyone producing these foods – including small scale operators.

Vacuum and modified atmosphere packaging are highly effective ways of preventing food spoilage but can create conditions which may lead to growth of anaerobic organisms such as *Clostridium botulinum*. This code of practice gives clear and practical advice on what conditions must be met in order to give chilled vacuum-packaged foods a shelf-life of more than 10 days. It details why such precautions are necessary and, in simple terms, explains the science behind the conditions under which psychrotrophic *Clostridium botulinum* will grow and produce toxin, and importantly when it will not, so enabling manufacturers to produce a range and variety of safe chilled products. It also gives background information on current relevant legislation and packaging aspects.

www.campden.co.uk +++

++ EUROPASTRY WITH LARGE INVESTMENTS

Frozen dough manufacturer Europastry from Sant Cugat del Vallès (Barcelona, Spain) has reported a 12% growth in turnover to 360m Euros in 2009. The company invested 34m Euros in new production lines in its Tarragona plants. Currently, Europastry is building a logistics warehouse in the town of Vallmoll for estimated 12m Euros.

www.europastry.com +++

++ ARYZTA GROWING

Aryzta AG, the global leader in speciality bakery, announced its financial results for the first six months of the fiscal year ended 31 July 2009 (six months ended 31 January 2009): The Group's revenues grew by 15.8% to 1,571.0m Euros; the adjusted profits rose by 15.4% to 84.0m Euros in the first six months. According to Aryzta's CEO Owen Killian, the business is very resilient and has displayed excellent defensive characteristics in the current challenging economic climate. The Group will continue to focus on cash and continued earnings growth.

www.aryzta.com +++