



# **CIES - The Food Business Forum PRESS RELEASE**

19/06/03

## **The Image of the Food Business Programme**

**CIES – The Food Business Forum’s new initiative: The Image of the Food Business programme (IFB) is now launched.** The IFB programme, initiated by CIES at the request of its Board of Directors, is led by CIES and a Task Force of fourteen executives from leading food retail companies around the world. As the overall scope of this project is so wide, it will focus on food retailing in the initial stages. However, suppliers are encouraged to join the programme to participate on appropriate overlapping interests.

### **The programme’s primary objectives are :**

1. an inclusive approach to serve the whole sector and to avoid duplication.
2. to gather existing material and bring it to a wider audience.
3. to provide a means for the sector and its representatives to speak with one voice, (recruitment, trade and community relations, expansion).
4. to tell the untold story of the contribution of food retail to society and reveal the contradictions in the most common criticisms heard about supermarkets.
5. to create a web-based knowledge resource centre where best practises and cutting edge information can be exchanged, by CIES members and the industry at large.

One of the programme’s main stipulations is to avoid duplication of work already accomplished. Rather, it should serve as a springboard that can amplify and multiply the output of existing efforts. IFB is already taking this into account by gathering existing material from companies, universities and trade associations.

The programme will enable all stakeholders to share and exchange non-competitive information in the interests of the sector as a whole. CIES will hold a meeting in Paris next week with several of the most important associations in Europe in order to identify and pool existing campaigns, research, surveys and publications existing in this area.

Apart from creating an awareness campaign as to how supermarkets ‘do their bit’ and actually contribute in a vast number of ways to local communities and to the world at large, the programme will also target employees. Employees are a stakeholder of the business but more importantly, they are also its potential ambassadors. If they have a positive attitude towards the sector, they in turn, can spread the word and change perceptions.

Finally, the IFB programme will host a conference / workshop, the first of its kind, on this very important issue in March 2004.



## The Story that remains Untold

Like them or not, everyone will agree that supermarkets play a major role in our day-to-day lives. Because of that people talk about them, - what they do, what they don't do, what they should do.... But there are contradictions in the most common criticisms heard about food retailers. They are too big, have too much power, they destroy small communities, put the local butcher out of business, discriminate the farmers, don't offer real jobs .....the list is long. The IFB programme will tackle this problem and demonstrate the contrary, by telling the untold story, by clarifying what the world would be without them, and by focusing on **“How Food Retailing Contributes to the Community”**.

## THE STORY THAT REMAINS UNTOLD : HOW FOOD RETAILING CONTRIBUTES TO THE COMMUNITY

### SOME EXAMPLES

THEME	FACTS
<b>Employment</b>	In 2000, one in nine of the employed population worked in retailing in the UK representing 2, 462 500 people. ( <i>British Retail Consortium</i> ) In the United States, one in five work in retailing. ( <i>Chain Store Age</i> )
<b>Macro-Economics</b>	Retailing represented £200 billion turnover in the UK in 1999 ( <i>British Retail Consortium</i> ) and generates over \$3 trillion in annual sales in the US. ( <i>Chain Store Age</i> )
<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>Food Deserts</b> : Research (including a before and after study), conducted by the University of Southampton proved that diets (consumption of fruit and vegetables) in a deprived area, with very poor retail provision in the UK improved after the opening of a Superstore. ( <i>The Grocer</i> )

**The programme will particularly highlight data and evidence demonstrating tangible and/or quantifiable economic, social, or other benefits:**

- Increased consumer choice through lower cost of living and opening new markets.
- Variety, scope and potential of retail careers.
- Urban renewal and job creation through store siting.
- New market development for SME suppliers to food retail businesses.

The focus of the programme will be on this untold story. There will be areas of overlap with other programmes or initiatives, most notably on issues regarding food products and marketing (food safety; nutrition; obesity) and on issues relating to corporate social responsibility. Where appropriate these issues will be covered by the programme.

## IFB TASK FORCE MEMBERS

COMPANIES	COUNTRIES
Carrefour	France
Casino	France
Delhaize Goup	Belgium
Gruppo Pam	Italy
Jeronimo Martins Retail	Portugal
Marks and Spencer	UK
Metro	Germany
Migros	Switzerland
Royal Ahold	The Netherlands
Superquinn	Ireland
Tengelmann	Germany
The Daiei	Japan
Wal-Mart	USA
Wellcome Supermarkets	Hong Kong

## TRADE ASSOCIATIONS PARTICIPATING IN IFB PROGRAMME

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	COUNTRIES
ERRT	Belgium
EuroCommerce	Belgium
FAID Federdistribuzione	Italy
FCD	France
IGD	UK
Retail Ireland	Ireland

## CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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