

Largest companies from food industry in Wales commit to increase vegetable content of their meals

New initiative is urging businesses from across Wales to help improve our vegetable consumption

S.A. Brain and Co and Castell Howell will today make commitments to increase the vegetable content in the meals that they serve to adults and children.

At a Vegetable Summit held today by the Peas Please initiative (24th October 2017) at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, commitments will be made by Welsh retailers, food producers and manufacturers, catering companies, restaurants, public bodies including Cardiff Council, and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to improve the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of vegetables that we eat.

S.A. Brain and Co, the largest brewery and hospitality company in Wales, are the first company from the brewery and hospitality industry in the UK to sign up to the initiative.

With 40% of the Welsh adult population eating out at pubs, restaurants and cafes once or twice a weekⁱ, the food wholesale and hospitality industry have a significant role to play in influencing the food that we eat, and our vegetable consumption. We currently only consume half a portion of vegetables for every 3 meals that we eat outⁱⁱ.

Led in Wales by Food Cardiff, the Peas Please initiative is urging all organisations involved in the production, supply and consumption of meals to back the campaign to put more vegetables on our plates.

Serving 230,000 children's meals per year, S.A. Brain and Co will increase the number of portions of vegetables in their children's meals. Castell Howell's manufacturing partner, Authentic Curries and World Foods, who supply supermarkets and restaurants, will aim for all new product development to contain a minimum of 1 portion of veg where appropriate, and will increase the vegetable content of recipes to ensure 21 of their existing meal lines contain at least one portion of veg.

Nolan Spratt, Head of Operations at S.A Brain and Co, said: "We are proud to become the first brewery and hospitality company in the UK to commit to the Peas Please initiative. As Wales' biggest brewer and hospitality company we welcome hundreds of thousands of families into our pubs every year and we understand the important role we can play in the health of adults and children. We pledge to increase the number of portions of vegetables and fruit served with our children's meals and through our menu development programme we will educate all pub personnel on the active promotion of the Peas Please initiative and the long-term benefits it can have."

Matt Lewis, Director of Castell Howell Foods, said: "As Wales' largest independent foodservice provider, with over 10,000 product lines, we fully recognise the significant role that the food industry has to play in improving the vegetable consumption of the nation. We

are delighted to be pledging today to not only increase the vegetable content in our Authentic Brand ready meals, but also to promote the benefits of consuming more vegetables with our customers and to train our workforce to promote a culture that is supportive of increased vegetable consumption”.

Recent research has shown that our consumption of fat (g) has increased by 22% and our consumption of calories has increased by 17% through eating outⁱⁱⁱ.

The health benefits to increasing our vegetable consumption are widely known. 80% of adults and 95.5% of children 11-16 years are not eating enough vegetables^{iv}.

Katie Palmer, who leads Food Cardiff, said, “We are delighted that two of Wales’ flagship foodservice companies have embraced the Peas Please initiative and we hope in doing so they will inspire others to make their own pledges. Today’s Vegetable Summit is just the start of the journey to increase the production and consumption of Veg in Wales and we urge any organisation wanting to get involved to get in touch”.

More information about the Peas Please initiative can be found here:

<http://foodfoundation.org.uk/peasplease/>

<http://foodcardiff.com/>

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ⁱ Food Standards Agency, 2016

ⁱⁱ The Food Foundation, 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ Defra, 2015

^{iv} The Food Foundation, 2017