

Corporate Social Responsibility

This document presents a trade association perspective of how millers and the milling industry manage business processes collectively to the benefit of society, which includes those working for the industry. These processes are addressed under the headings of Health and Safety; Environment; Social Responsibility; Nutrition; Sustainable Agriculture and Ethical Trading; Food Safety; and Sustainable Industry. Areas such as corporate governance are more relevant to individual companies, so this paper concentrates on the collective policies and commitments to social responsibility supported by **nabim** members, who produce 98% of the flour milled in the UK

Health and Safety

The UK flour milling industry is committed to the health and safety of the industry's workforce. **nabim** has a health and safety committee of representatives from the major milling companies which meets quarterly to co-ordinate meeting of regulatory requirements but also best practice. The chairman of this group is a member of **nabim**'s Executive Committee (equivalent to the board). The industry has a good record in health and safety which has been supported by a positive and constructive relationship with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

- **nabim** works with other associations such as the National Association of Master Bakers, the Federation of Bakers and the Agricultural Industries Confederation on health and safety issues.
- **nabim** disseminates guidance to the industry on health and safety matters, sometimes developed in co-operation with other associations; for example, a leaflet promoting good practice in flour deliveries was supported by several associations representing the baking industries.
- **nabim** has commissioned research into the characteristics of flour, providing essential information for millers and mill engineers alike to ensure prevention of dust explosions. **nabim** has also jointly sponsored projects with the HSE e.g. vent design for elevators used to move grain.
- **nabim** collects reports on fire and accidents from member companies, analysing them to see if any lessons can be learned for the benefit of the entire industry. Analysis may be posted on mill notice boards. Mills are very good at reporting any accidents, the HSE receiving reports of over 90% of those that occur (copied to **nabim**) compared to an all-industry average of around 40%.
- **nabim** runs initiatives aimed at raising and maintaining awareness of health and safety throughout the workforce, across the country. Seminars are regularly held with speakers from HSE and the industry. Member companies are actively involved with providing occupational health assessments and are aware of issues such as asthma, dermatitis, musculo-skeletal problems and noise-induced hearing loss.

The industry will continue to raise awareness amongst its employees and help milling companies implement best practice in health and safety.

Environment

nabim promotes environmental best practice for the flour milling sector via its

Environment Working Group. **nabim** seeks to help millers reduce environmental impacts. Mills are low-polluting dry processes. The major environmental impact is energy usage and energy is also millers' second largest expense after procurement of raw materials. Initiatives have included:

- the *development* of an Environment Management System template that can be used and adapted by all mills. This system, which is updated on an annual basis, is used widely in the industry. Some of the larger mills have already implemented Environment Management Systems and standards (e.g. ISO14001).
- preparation of *guidelines* for larger mills to meet the requirements of IPPC regulations.
- *benchmarking* of energy efficiency for milling businesses, beginning in the early 1990s.
- production, with support from government, of a *Good Practice guide (212) to energy efficiency* in flour milling. This technical guide, produced in 1997 was reviewed by nabim's Environment Working Group in 2004. It remains valid and up-to-date.

Flour millers are responsive to their local communities. For example, noise is sometimes a problem to people living nearby and mills take any complaints about noise seriously. In response to local communities, many mills have taken action to reduce the vehicle reversing alarms from sounding during the night (perhaps the most common complaint).

The industry will continue to assess its environmental record and how it might best reduce impacts and raise awareness on the environment.

Training and Development

nabim is committed to the development of the people within the flour milling industry and places a high priority on education and training. The flour milling industry is a highly skilled and challenging industry, with training and education playing a vital role in employee development.

- **nabim** runs a training programme and a means of assessing practical competency in flour milling through its *Craft Skills Certificate*.
- **nabim** also runs modular Flour Milling *correspondence courses* for millers in the UK and overseas, and in 2005 took over from City and Guilds the role of examining and awarding body. Students, supported by tutors from the UK milling industry, can study up to seven modules which, on average, take three to four years to complete.
- In 2006/7, **nabim** introduced an *advanced diploma* to meet more demanding requirements of this highly skilled industry.

nabim will continue to assess and lead the training and development needs of the industry.

Nutrition and Obesity

The milling industry is a key part of the food chain, and flour makes a major contribution to the national diet. Millers have always been aware of the responsibility

that this entails and in 1956, **nabim** founded the Flour Advisory Bureau (FAB) www.fabflour.co.uk, the central source of information relating to wheat and flour, to promote healthy eating and cooking skills. Detailed below are the current aims of FAB and examples of work undertaken on behalf of the milling industry and the wider community:

- To *combat obesity*: for example, the industry funded and produced reports with the Medical Research Council on obesity - 'The Weight of the Nation' 1999 and 'Tackling the Weight of the Nation' 2003 (available from **nabim**). These readable documents first identified the emerging issues and then strategies that have been shown to work in managing overweight and obesity.
- To communicate important messages about the source of food and *healthy eating* to children: FAB has undertaken education campaigns since the 1970s and in partnership with the Home Grown Cereals Authority launched an educational website www.flourandgrain.com in 2001. Recent initiatives include an integrated resource pack on energy balance (covering all 4 key stages - 5 to 16 year olds) and a new DVD promoting cooking skills.
- To promote *balanced diet* messages and sensible eating to adults: In response to a series of faddy diets, FAB developed the Vitality Eating System, as an attractive resource based on sensible healthy eating advice.
- To provide an *information service* to consumers: In partnership with others, **nabim** funds the 'Grain Information Service' which provides consumers with information on diet, wheat intolerance and coeliac disease.

The industry will continue to promote healthy eating messages based on the nutritional consensus and provide consumers with balanced information on nutrition.

Sustainable Agriculture and Ethical Trading

- Millers require both a *sustainable* and *competitively* priced wheat supply in order to deliver flour of consistent quality. **nabim** participates in several organisations, including the Cereals Industry Forum, which work towards the goal of an efficient cereals chain and sustainable UK agriculture.
- Since the mid-1970s, millers have steadily increased the amount of UK wheat they use. Nowadays over 80% of *wheat is sourced from the UK* compared with less than 50% thirty years ago.
- This has been achieved through the development of wheat varieties with high quality characteristics suited to UK growing conditions and technical innovation in the milling and baking sectors.
- **nabim** continues to work with plant breeders on the development of new varieties and provides information to UK farmers and traders through an annual wheat guide.
- Although some sourcing of high protein wheats for breadmaking e.g. from the US and Canada is necessary to support the use of UK wheats, *food miles have been reduced significantly* by this move to UK quality wheats.
- **nabim** played a key role in the development of farm assurance in the arable sector in the late 1990s. From September 2000, members have purchased UK wheat exclusively from assured suppliers.
- **nabim** has also supported improving *environmental standards* in UK farming through membership of LEAF www.leafuk.org.

- All wheat is purchased on the basis of written contracts, which have built-in *dispute resolution* procedures.
- Where imported, wheat is sourced from countries where *child labour* is not an issue.
- **nabim** has worked with partners in the cereals liaison group to develop a checklist of issues for growers to consider before agreeing a contract (the cereals sellers checklist); it also has a *code of practice* setting out deliveries will be handled.
- **nabim** members participate in an audited scheme which tests the performance of their quality testing at intake. The *proficiency* status of laboratories is here

Food Safety

The flour milling industry has always taken food safety extremely seriously. **nabim's** Technical and Regulatory Affairs Committee meets quarterly to review issues which may have a food safety or public concern dimension such as pesticides, other contaminants and microbiological issues. This group directs much of **nabim's** monitoring and research work.

- **nabim** has carried out a *monitoring* programme for pesticides and mycotoxins in wheat since the late 1980s.
- In the early 1990s, it played a key part in creating a system for suppliers to *declare pesticide* treatment on a grain "passport"
- the industry has run a programme to check the *microbiological* status of each harvest for more than 20 years.
- **nabim** developed a guide to *Good Hygiene Practice* in the mid 1990s. This will be reviewed and updated in 2005.
- **nabim** played a leading part in the creation of a cross-sectoral *mycotoxins forum* in 2003 and has since sponsored briefing seminars on the subject to disseminate information to growers and traders of grain. Simple guidance aimed at farmers, communicating risk factors, was included in nabim's 2006 wheat guide.
- **nabim** has developed a *checklist* of key issues for agrochemical companies before new products come to the market, to avoid the risk of rejection at a later stage.

The industry aims to continue monitoring pesticides and contaminants, and undertake research to improve customer assurance of the safety of flour millers' products.

Sustainable industry

The UK is self-sufficient in flour with UK millers producing predominantly for the domestic market with a small positive trade balance. The industry is among the most efficient in Europe in terms of the size of mills; in the UK there are 66 mills producing around 4.5mt of flour whereas around 540 mills produce approximately the same quantity in France. **nabim** continues to work to help ensure that the UK flour milling industry remains competitive, efficient, sustainable and continues to play a key and responsible part in the country's food supply network.

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