



## Year report 2003 - 2004

### Themes in the year: Health claims and contamination

The latest strategies used by baby food companies were exposed in the *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004* monitoring report which we launched with colleagues in the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) in May at the House of Commons. The results, gathered in 69 countries, demonstrate continued disrespect for the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly. Nestlé was again found to be the worst of the companies, although we have largely stopped it from labelling complementary foods for use from too early an age.

The monitoring shows how companies increasingly idealise their products with health and nutrition claims, especially for 'optional ingredients' such as Long Chain fatty acids (LCPs), and Pre- and Pro-biotics. Nestlé's is using hypo-allergenic claims to promote its formula to health workers in the UK despite legal action in the United States which ruled the name as misleading. This followed several cases of anaphylactic shock in allergic infants fed the milk. The issue of health claims, along with continued concerns about contamination of powdered infant formula by pathogens, were central to discussions at Codex Alimentarius, the EU Commission and the World Health Assembly.

Thirteen years after the adoption of the EU Directive on infant formula, the European Commission issued very weak proposals for a redrafted Directive which allow several new claims. The EU Commission position, which so favours industry, undermines the efforts of many countries inside and outside the EU to protect breastfeeding. The tough draft WHA Resolution, proposed by 6 countries in May was delayed by a year, following pressure by the USA, Canada, Germany, Japan and Australia and Russia. Palau, a sponsor of the Resolution cautioned: "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Meanwhile, concern continues to grow over *Enterobacter Sakazakii* contamination of powdered infant formula. Baby Milk Action and our IBFAN partners are calling for levels of contamination to be reduced and for clear warnings on labels and better preparation instructions. The baby food industry, anxious to protect the idealised image of their products, opposes the moves.

The UK Department of Health press release during National Breastfeeding Week entitled: "Myths stop women giving babies the best start in life", reported that: "Over a third (34%) of women believe that modern infant formula milks are very similar or the same as breastmilk." The monitoring report we produced on behalf of the Baby Feeding Law Group demonstrates how companies have promoted this myth. The report is being distributed widely as part of our campaign to strengthen UK law and to empower people to report and stop malpractice.

Cover: Money-off promotions, health claims, carelines, free gifts. Standard practice for the baby food industry in the UK.

# REPORT

BABY MILK ACTION



October  
September  
2003 - 2004



## Baby Milk Action

### Council of Directors

Gary Woolley, Chair

Mike Bailey

Fiona Duby

Rachel O'Leary

John Wilkinson

Catherine Woodhouse

### Company Secretary

Lisa Woodburn

### Staff

Paul Butt, Barbara French (until Feb 2004)

Phyl Buchanan, Andy Chetley, Prof. G.J. Ebrahim, Chloe Fisher, Peter Greaves, Prof. Raymond Hodgson, Sheila Kitzinger, Dr Tim Lobstein, Prof. David Morley, Gabrielle Palmer, Dr. Peter Roore, Dr. Andrew Porter, Mary Dr. Kenrew, Magda Sachs, Dr. Penny Stanway, Dr. Tony Waterston, Kevin Watkins, Dr. A.F. Williams, Dr Pam Zinkin.

### Volunteers

Sonia de Oliveira Brady, Elaine Heath, Louise Krkumivsky, Tessa Martyn, Song Hee Min, Lisa Woodburn.

### Advisors

Particular thanks go to Area Contacts who stood down during 2003 - 2004 for their contribution to the campaign over the years.

Aileen Banks, Hannah Bird, Barbara Bovington, Anne Bramley, Martianne Cowpe, Belinda Cox, Dh. Dharmavandana, Jonathan Dorset, Anne Ellis, Barbara Gleave, Patricia Hamilton, Joanna Hindley, Sarah Hughes & Andrew Finney, Jennifer Imman, Vicki Islam, Liz Lawrence, Steven Lee, Brenda Lewsey Cocks, Caroline Hind, Sue Malpass, Ellen Mateer, Jan Miller, Annette Ogilvie-Forbes, Mary Paterson, Jan Price, Jane Pursey, Jacqueline Quick, Catherine Reading, Carl Richards, Jenny Richardson, Magda Sachs, Sarah Saunby, Harriet Smith, Jane Tapp, Franke Taylor, Mary Tones, Bernadette Walker, Katy Waters, Tracey Wells, Janette Westman, Patricia Wise, Catherine Woodhouse.

### Area contacts

The following served as area contacts during the year:

## Baby Milk Action supports IBFAN's principles:

• **the right of infants** everywhere to the highest level of health,

• **the right of families** to enough nutritious food,

• **the right of women** to informed choices about infant feeding,

• **the right of women** to fill support for successful breastfeeding and for sound infant feeding practices,

• **the right of all people** to health services which meet basic needs,

• **the right of health workers** and consumers to health care systems which are free from commercial pressures,

• **the right of people** to organise in international solidarity to secure changes which protect and promote basic health, and ethical behaviour on the part of baby food companies.

## FINANCES

Baby Milk Action's work this year has been funded by grants from The Dorset Charitable Trust, The Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust, The Funding Network, The Gibbs Charitable Trust, GIFA, International Code Documentation Centre, The King's Fund, The Methodist Relief & Development Fund, The Network for Social Change, OXFAM, The Polaris Foundation, Charitable Foundation, Save the Children, SCIAF, UNISON, the United Reformed Church, MEMOS and World Vision.

Membership fees, donations and merchandise sales now make up 45% of our income. We are grateful to all our supporters, without whom our work would not be possible.

We made a small surplus, in contrast to the previous year's deficit, mainly through cutting back on staff hours.

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Full accounts will be available at the AGM & on request.

Charts are based on draft audited figures.

Reserves = £26,365

Net Profit = £3,225

Total expenditure = £136,226

1. Projects & campaigns 66%

2. Membership support and (inc. publications and merchandise) 15%

3. Overheads 19%

1. Total income = £139,951

1. Grants & project income 54%

2. Membership 17%

3. Publications and merchandise 16%

4. Donations 12%

5. Other 1%

October 2003 - September 2004

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The demonstration outside the Perth Award ceremony of the Edinburgh Fringe featured a 12 foot high puppet and was supported by York Balliol, Member of the Scottish Parliament

# 2003 BABY MILK ACTION 2004

## Raising Awareness

● Members and supporters were essential in raising awareness of the many issues that we tackle. The Boycott of Nestlé, the company responsible for more aggressive baby food promotion than any other, continued to bring public attention to the global concerns. Nestlé lost debates with Baby Milk Action at Nottingham, Reading and Sheffield Universities.

● Area contacts and staff held stalls and workshops at festivals and health professional, trade union and political conferences. The London Group organized the annual demonstration at Nestlé (UK) HQ in May. The Reading and Berkshire group organised our stall at the WOMAD festival in July. We joined Out of the Blue trust for the annual corporate-free Tap Water Awards and a demonstration at Nestlé's Perrier Comedy Award at the Edinburgh Fringe

Festival in August.

● Demonstrations were held at several training days on infant nutrition organised by SMA to highlight the company's criminal conviction for illegal formula advertising in the UK and marketing malpractice worldwide.

● Conferences organised by the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers, Scottish NHS Boards and Centre for International Child Health included presentations on the marketing requirements by Baby Milk Action.

● We were invited to speak at a conference organised by leading environment and human rights NGOs in Nestlé's home city of Vevey, Switzerland in June. The Conference exposed Nestlé malpractice and endorsed a letter calling for Nestlé to be excluded from the United Nations Global Compact.



Area contacts help promote the campaign around the country. Above, at the WOMAD Festival in Reading, a breast advertising Baby Milk Action's theatre performance collects more leaflets.

### BABY MILK ACTION



Baby Milk Action aims to save infant lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. We work within the global network, IBFAN, to strengthen independent, transparent and effective controls on the marketing of the baby feeding industry worldwide.

## IBFAN

● IBFAN (the International Baby Food Action Network) celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2004. We are the UK member of this network, which was formed by 6 groups. There are now more than 200 groups in over 100 countries.



Network of India. Key Policy makers joined over 500 participants from 38 countries and from nearly every state of India. We also attended the Regional Colloquium on HIV and infant feeding.

● In December we gave a presentation at the Asia Pacific Conference, organised by the IBFAN group, the Breastfeeding Promotion

responsibility for Code Advocacy in Europe. We maintain the multi-lingual IBFAN website.



Deana Vearcombe, a Health Visitor from Fylde, received the 2004 Julie Crawford Award for Breastfeeding Support. Julie was a Baby Milk Action Director and Area Contact.

## Code Advocacy

● We joined our IBFAN partners at the WHO Executive Board meeting in January and the World Health Assembly in May where a strong draft Resolution calling for no health claims on infant foods, controls on the sponsorship of health workers and warnings on powdered infant formula labels about contamination, was tabled by 6 small countries. Despite the strong support for the Resolution, a few countries successfully called for the matter to be delayed until 2005. We also worked on WHO's Global Strategy on Diet and Physical Activity which was eventually passed. Although fierce lobbying by the sugar industry substantially weakened the text, our advocacy helped to ensure breastfeeding was included. Before the WHO meetings we organised briefing sessions with health and development NGOs and the UK Government.

April, the European Commission issued a proposal for a revision of the European Directive on infant formula. Together with IBFAN Luxembourg we coordinated the lobby to bring the Directive in line with the International Code and WHA Resolutions.

● At WHO Europe's 4th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Budapest in June, together with IBFAN Luxembourg, we succeeded in getting measures to protect breastfeeding included in the Children's Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). With environmental NGOs we monitored media reports on contamination and breastfeeding. Following our intervention, WHO changed the page on pollution in its new atlas, Inheriting the World, to stress breastfeeding is still best for infants.

● We attended Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings in Germany in November and in Canada in May. A qualified ban on health and nutrition claims on foods for infants and young children was finally adopted in July.

● In March we organised a training day on the Code for policy makers from the UK Food Standards Agency and the Departments of Health and International Development. In

## Networking

● We continued as the Secretariat of the Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG) Strengthening UK baby food laws. We continued as the Secretariat of the Baby Feeding Law Group (UK) which has 16 member organisations, including the Royal College of Midwives, the Health Visitors Association and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. The group campaigns to strengthen UK legislation in line with the International Code and Resolutions.



● As the Coordinator of the International Nestlé Boycott, we attended the Nestlé AGM in Switzerland in April, calling on Nestlé to put warnings on the labels of its infant formula.

● We are members of NGO networks such as Sustain, the UK Consortium on AIDS and the UK Food Group and work with trade unions such as UNISON.

## Monitoring and Reporting

● We continued to produce the Campaign for Ethical Marketing action sheets, targeting the violations of all companies, and assisting supporters to write letters.

● We coordinated the launch of IBFAN's global monitoring report, Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004, at the House of Commons in May, linked to an Early Day Motion tabled by Lynne Jones MP calling for action to end malpractice, which gained wide support. We were joined by IBFAN experts from around the world (right). A film of the

launch is available on DVD and video.

● As part of UK monitoring facilitated by the King's Fund, we produced a Look What They're Doing in the UK monitoring report. With the help of the National Childbirth Trust, over 15,000 copies have been distributed.



Our UK monitoring project has found a surprising amount of illegal promotion in UK pharmacies and supermarkets as well as widespread violation of the Code and Resolutions by all baby food companies. The government has given a commitment to strengthen the law

## Publishing and Marketing

● We produced one issue of the Update newsletter, along with several briefing and policy papers.

● Sure Start child-support centres are finding our breastfeeding promotion materials (such as our breastfeeding calendar) of great use, which helps to keep our merchandise sales up.

● Visitors to the Baby Milk Action website access over

43,000 pages every month, many downloading leaflets, posters and briefing papers for their campaigning work. A 'broadcasts' section contains film clips, such as the WOMAD theatre piece.

