



Year Report 2009 - 2010

Baby Milk Action

Council of Directors

Rachel O'Leary, Chair
Lisa Northover
Julie Dyball
Fiona DUBY
Hugh Simon
Phyll Buchanan
Yvonne Wake
Sarah Saunby

Company Secretary

Lisa Woodburn

Staff

Patti Rundall, OBE, Policy Director
Mike Brady, Campaigns Coordinator
Sarah Hansen, Office Manager
Paul Bolt, Bookkeeper

Advisors

Andy Chelley, Dr Emmanuel Diamond, Prof. G.J. Ebrahim, Chloe Fisher, Peter Greaves, Prof. Raymond Hodgson, Sheila Kitzinger, Dr Tim Lobstien, Gabrielle Palmer, Dr. Peter Poore, Dr. Andrew Porter, Mary Kenfrew, Magda Sachs, Dr. Penny Stanway, Dr. Tony Warston, Kevin Watkins, Dr. A.F. Williams, Dr Pam Zinkin.



Lisa Woodburn and Sarah Hansen produced the breastfeeding calendar for the IBFAN network. This is a major fundraiser for Baby Milk Action and provides a corporate-free alternative for health centres and elsewhere.

We would like to express our appreciation to all our Area Contacts.

Aileen Banks, Hannah Bird, Sharon Beward, Elaine Heath, Lisa Woodburn, Michael Hansen, Jon Rundall.

The following served as area contacts during the year:

Volunteers

Area contacts

Patricia Hamill, Caroline Hind, Joanna Lawrence, Steven Lee, Kristie Legg, Sue Malpass, Adele McGarry-Watson, Julie McKrae, Annette Ogilvie-Forbes, Mary Paterson, Jan Price, Jane Putsey, Jacqueline Quick, Catherine Reading, Carl Richards, Jenny Richardson, Magda Sachs, Sarah Saunby, Harriet Smith, Sarah Squires, Jane Tapp, Frankie Taylor, Mary Tones, Liz Urwin, Bernadette Walker, Janette Westman, Patricia Wise.

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Year report 2009 - 2010

Tackling Health Claims

Making health and nutrition claims about added ingredients is an effective way to make products seem like the healthy option. For many years we have been advocating that claims (except perhaps lactose-free claims) should not be allowed on foods for infants and young children because they are so misleading: no baby food has a health advantage over breastfeeding or healthy family foods. But the industry opposition to controls is fierce and all over the world, claims are persuading parents that expensive and often poor-quality products will make their children brainier, healthier or safer. It is an issue policy makers should not ignore.

In the UK we prompted a crackdown by the Government on several unauthorised claims such as 'closer to breastmilk' and succeeded in getting some good rulings from the Advertising Standards Authority. We have also helped Member States bring in Guidelines and Resolutions at the World Health Assembly and Code calling for claims to be prohibited.

In Europe we helped strengthen the European Health and Nutrition Claims Regulations.¹ This Regulation does not prohibit baby food claims (as we wanted) but aims to make sure claims are truthful and to 'facilitate' consumer choice. Companies wanting to have a claim authorised for Europe must first submit dossiers of evidence to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and then Member

States and the Commission decide if it should be allowed. Parliamentarians then have a chance to comment. However this process has serious flaws. EFSA is only required to look at efficacy - *does the ingredient do what it claims?*

"We find the case for labelling infant formula or follow on formula with health or nutrition claims entirely unsupported. If an ingredient is unequivocally beneficial as demonstrated by independent review of scientific data it would be unethical to withhold it for commercial reasons. Rather it should be made a required ingredient of infant formula in order to reduce existing risks associated with artificial feeding."

UK Gov. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. 2007

- not risk - is the claim or ingredient safe? Nor is EFSA required to look at independently-funded evidence, relying only on the industry dossiers, some parts of which are kept confidential for commercial reasons. The risks are left to the European Commission and Member States who meet behind closed doors.

Nevertheless, and much to the fury of the food industry, EFSA has decided that the majority of the thousands of claims submitted are unsubstantiated, including many formula claims for *Immunofortis*, *prebiotics* etc. But a chain is only as good as its weakest link, and EFSA has given a positive opinion on a few formula claims (relating to long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPUFAS)). This is in conflict with leading scientific opinion such as the 2007 Cochrane Systematic Review which found that: *"feeding term infants with milk formula enriched with LCPUFA had no proven benefit regarding vision, cognition or physical growth."* EFSA admitted that it could not have reached its conclusion *"without considering the studies claimed by the applicant as proprietary"* and that *"none of the studies presented has shown a benefit of either DHA alone or DHA plus ARA on visual development as compared to the breast fed control group"* We are now working with EU Parliamentarians to stop these claims being officially authorised and to bring in more effective and transparent controls.²



October

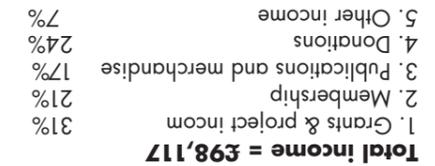
September

2009 - 2010

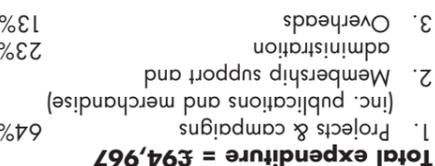
1- European Nutrition and Health Claims Regulations (1924/2006)

2 See briefing: 10 reasons to stop this DHA claim.

Baby Milk Action income October 2009 - September 2010



Baby Milk Action expenditure October 2009 - September 2010



Net Profit to reserve: £3,150
Reserves: £11,354

Charts are based on draft figures. Full accounts will be available at the AGM & on request.

We are grateful to all our supporters who are essential to our effectiveness. Our Office Manager and volunteers in Cambridge (special thanks to Lisa Woodburn) provide materials, merchandise for stalls and process orders. Membership, merchandise and donations now make up over half of our income, which the economic downturn has much reduced. Cuts in expenditure have had to be made across all areas once again, including staff hours.

United Reformed Church. Social Change, OXFAM, Save the Children, S.E Franklin Deceased Charity, SCIAF and the funded by grants from CAFOD, Network for Baby Milk Action's work this year has been

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 full 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 pressure, the right of people to organise in international solidarity to secure changes which protect and promote basic health, and ethical behaviour of the baby food industry.

IBFAN's principles: Baby Milk Action supports

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Email: info@baby milkaction.org
Website: www.baby milkaction.org

2009 BABY MILK ACTION 2010

Raising Awareness

Members and supporters were essential in raising awareness of the importance of protecting infant and young child health. Area contacts and staff held stalls and workshops at events in the UK including those organised by the Lactation Consultants GB, Baby Friendly Initiative, Breastfeeding Network, and La Leche League GB. We participated in the first Ulverston Breastfeeding Festival in the Lake District in August.

We coordinate the international boycott of Nestlé, the company responsible for more aggressive baby food promotion than any other. We also monitor other companies such as Danone, the world's second largest baby food manufacturer. Danone promised us it would conduct a 'root and branch' review after taking over the Nutricia, Milupa and Cow&Gate brands. We are evaluating the results of this.

In October we promoted International Nestlé-Free Week, which took off as a Halloween boycott of Nestlé candy in the US in 2009.

We continued to pursue a joint complaint about Nestlé at the UN Global Compact Office on behalf of the coalition

that we formed in setting up the Nestlé Critics website, a portal to information on all aspects of Nestlé's business.

At Nestlé's AGM in April in Lausanne we once more raised concerns about Nestlé's baby milk marketing, its use of 'education' and sponsorship, and its claims that formula 'protects' babies. This year Greenpeace cut through the ceiling to protest about the exploitation of rainforests, and more charges were made about Nestlé's spying activities. Fighting to be heard over the drilling noise, Chairman Peter Brabeck made his usual boasts about the company and then warned that tying corporations up in a 'regulatory straightjacket' is unnecessary when companies such as Nestlé have such sound principles and core values!

Our youtube video of spoof marketing guru, Mr. Henry Nastie, was filmed at our demonstration at Nestlé (UK) HQ in Croydon in May.

We coordinated the *Infant Formula Explained* film project for the Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG) producing educational films for healthworkers and parents - available under license in 2011.

BABY MILK ACTION

30 YEARS

IBFAN
Protecting infant health

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, using the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly as a baseline. Good breastfeeding practices top the list of interventions to reduce under-5 mortality and could save more lives than other key preventive measures such as immunisation, safe water and sanitation.

10 reasons to stop this DHA claim

A typical advert by Nestlé, showing that DHA fortified formulae are not the best for your baby.

1 The claim, which was approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), conflicts with leading scientific opinion. Although there is no evidence of a causal relationship between formulae fortified with long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids and better visual acuity in term babies, the 2007 Codex Alimentarius standards state: "This source of DHA has not been shown to be beneficial for infants up to 12 months of age."

2 The production of DHA in formulae is a different biological environment to breastmilk, which is a complex mixture of lipids, proteins, and other nutrients. It is not clear how DHA is absorbed or metabolized by the infant's body.

3 EFSA is not required to look at independently funded research that has found that DHA is not beneficial for infants up to 12 months of age.

4 EFSA is not required to assess the 'value' of DHA in formulae, which is left to Member States and the Commission when they decide on the regulation of the product. The December meeting of the Member States was also attended by the Director General of the World Health Organization, who stated that the use of DHA in formulae is not recommended for infants and young children, and more specifically on infants under 12 months of age.

5 A review of the regulatory procedure is badly needed and the Commission should be asked to 'buy other babies' in June 2011.

www.babyaction.org

Above: Briefing on claims and WHO's 'Junk Food Code.'

Below: Fully updated Infant Feeding and Obesity poster - now in French too!

INFANT FEEDING AND OBESITY

Scientific evidence indicates that breastfeeding provides an ideal window of opportunity for obesity prevention and may help in the development of taste receptors and appetite control.



Above: Checking to see if the new Resolution is OK at the World Health Assembly in May: Dr Arun Gupta, Regional Coordinator for IBFAN Asia, Annelies Allain, Director IBFAN/ICDC Malaysia and Elisabeth Sterken, Director, INFACIA Canada (behind the papers). Our relaunched website highlights our "Protecting breastfeeding - Protecting babies fed on formula" slogan, with Facebook & email links and members area.

Code Advocacy

Baby Milk Action tries to ensure that breastfeeding and the *International Code* are safeguarded in UK, EU and United Nations policy setting, submitting comments to consultations and taking a lead role in the coordination of NGO advocacy and networking.

Since May, the UK has been governed by a Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition which presents new challenges. The Liberal Democrats are endorsers of the Nestlé Boycott and of the BFLG's demand to fully implement the WHO/UNICEF *International Code* and WHA Resolutions. The Coalition Programme for Government also promises to 'crackdown on irresponsible marketing,' to 'promote public health,' to 'protect consumers' and to 'tackle health inequalities.' Despite this, the Coalition clearly favours voluntary approaches over regulation and has even invited the major food giants to fund and lead the obesity programme **Change4Life (C4L)**.

Fearing that **Start4Life (S4L)** (which deals with infant feeding) would be affected, BFLG and the **Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition (BMC)** set out their joint position on its funding. We stated that funding from any infant feeding, food, tobacco or alcohol company, or any company targeting families, would be totally unacceptable. The Department of Health and Secretary of State for Health have promised that BFLG will be consulted about any potential S4L sponsors.

In 2010 the **Royal College of Midwives**, a key member of the BFLG, stopped carrying

adverts for breastmilk substitutes in its journal. Another BFLG member, the **Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association** is steadily reducing the number of infant formula adverts carried.

We represent IBFAN on the European Commission's **Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health** which was evaluated during the year. We continue to highlight the need for the EU to harmonise with WHA Resolutions, the importance of independent monitoring and the risks of corporate sponsorship of education.

We joined the **Save the Children** team and IBFAN at the World Health Assembly in May where two Resolutions were adopted which could have a long-lasting impact on child health. WHA Resolution 63.23 addressed four of IBFAN's concerns: infant feeding in emergencies, the need for regulation rather than voluntary measures, the inappropriate marketing of baby foods and health and nutrition claims (see back page). WHA Resolution 63.14 endorsed WHO's *Recommendations on Marketing of Foods to Children* - the 'Junk Food Code' (see left) - which among many things, called on governments to take a lead in policy setting, to restrict marketing in 'settings where children gather' and to 'avoid conflicts of interest.'

We kept a close eye on the UN **Codex Alimentarius** meeting in Germany in November, where the food industry and **GAIN** are pushing their market-led approaches through new work on fortified baby foods and supplements.

IBFAN

We are the UK member of IBFAN (the **International Baby Food Action Network**) which has more than 200 groups in over 100 countries. We are responsible for company campaigns and Code advocacy in Europe.



UNICEF, highlighted a new global marketing report from **Euromonitor International**, which clearly showed the impact of regulation on sales and why companies are so

opposed to regulations - unless it's to protect brands and intellectual property.

We continued to support our partners' efforts to strengthen legislation in countries such as the Philippines and South Africa.

Monitoring and Reporting

We produce the **Campaign for Ethical Marketing** action sheets, exposing marketing malpractice around the world by all baby feeding companies and helping supporters write letters to company executives.

We launched an e-mail Nestlé campaign in June, over its latest global baby milk marketing strategy: it is promoting its formula with the claim it 'protects' babies and had dismissed our direct complaints. After receiving thousands of emails, Nestlé said it has discontinued a leaflet claiming its formula is 'The New Gold Standard' in infant nutrition' and has admitted that adding ingredients highlighted in its

'protect' logos - such as DHA and ARA - to formula has 'no proven benefit'. However, it is still refusing to remove the logos and the campaign continues.

We monitor the baby food marketing in the UK with the help of people reporting violations through the **BFLG** website, which we manage. We also supported people in registering complaints with the enforcement authorities **babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk**

We are developing an online training course on monitoring the baby food industry. Members can do the first two courses free of charge.

2011

Breastfeeding Calendar

What we do How to help

Protecting breastfeeding Protecting babies fed on formula

The 2011 IBFAN Calendar Our new flyer

www.babymilkaction.org
www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk
www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk
www.nestlecritics.org

Networking

We are the Secretariat of the 23-Member UK **BFLG** which includes the Royal Colleges of Paediatrics, Midwives and Nursing, the **Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association** and **UNISON**. We are also on the Steering Group of the



BMC leading on one of its seven objectives, the *International Code*.

We are a Trustee of **Sustain**, and member of the **Children's Food Bill**, the **UK Consortium on AIDS**, the **CASE Privatisation Group**, the **Trade Justice Movement** and the **UK Food Group**.

Publishing and Marketing

Members are extremely important as multipliers and over half of our income comes from membership, donations and merchandise sales.

In November we sent our supporters in the UK and 86 countries copies of **Update** newsletter.

The website and the Campaign and new Policy blog are regularly updated. We received about 600,000 visitors in the course of the year. We are also on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

Our fully updated **Infant Feeding and Obesity** Poster is available in French and English (see above left).