

Press release

27 March 2006



Ofcom must put children's health before company profits

Responding to media speculation that tomorrow Ofcom will recommend banning TV adverts for junk food before the early evening, Richard Watts, Children's Food Bill campaign coordinator at Sustain, said: "If Ofcom are serious about putting children's health above the narrow interests of the food and advertising industries they should stop all junk food TV ads before the 9pm watershed.

"Kid's don't just watch children's programmes. The figures show that Coronation Street is the commercial TV programme most watched by children.

"Unless kids are protected from junk food adverts during programmes like 'X Factor', 'The Bill' or 'I'm a Celebrity...' new rules will be meaningless.

"Most research, including Ofcom's own, shows TV advertising has an effect on children's diets. The health time bomb of childhood obesity can only be defused by radical action. Anything less and Ofcom will have failed in its duty to protect the public. If it does, we will look to the Government to take action to protect our kids by supporting the Children's Food Bill."

Ends

All media enquiries should be directed to:

Richard Watts: Tel: 020 7837 1228 (work); 07710 782719 (mobile); email: richard@sustainweb.org

Jeanette Longfield: Tel: 020 7837 1228 (work) email: jeanette@sustainweb.org

Notes to Editors:

1. Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, advocates food and agricultural policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. Sustain is a registered charity and has a membership of around 100 national public interest organisations. For more information, see: www.sustainweb.org.

2. Ofcom research from 2003 shows that none of the top five commercial TV programmes watched by children are shown during the hours of children's TV. The top five are:

1) Coronation Street

- 2) Pop Idol
- 3) Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 4) Pop Idol Live Final
- 5) The Brit Awards

3. Last year ITV recorded a 37 percent rise in profits last year to just under £500 million a year.

4. One in three children in Britain is overweight or obese. Obesity in under-11s has risen by over 40% in ten years.

5. The Children's Food Bill calls for:

- . protecting children from the marketing of unhealthy food and drink products
- . ensuring all food in schools is healthy
- . teaching food education and practical food skills, such as cooking and growing, to all children
- . ensuring the government promotes healthy foods, like fruit and vegetables, to children

The Bill is supported by over 280 MPs, 300 organisations and 11,000 members of the public.