NEWSLETTER N. 18

ABSTRACT: 16 October: World Food Day; Great Britain. The Food Standards Agency launches a campaign for the reduction of salt consumption; Nestlè, the Nutrikid project goes on.

16 October: World Food Day

Almost one-sixth of the entire global population suffers from hunger. A bewildering figure disclosed by FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization) during the World Food Day that took place on October 16 last. According to FAO, with an estimated increase by 105 million in 2009, there are 1.02 billion malnourished people in the world today.

The disclosure was followed by a plea: both public and private investments are needed: more specifically, targeted public interventions are needed, to encourage and facilitate private investments, especially by farmers themselves. Crisis or not, we have the skills we need to do something against hunger. We are also perfectly able to raise funds to solve problems we deem important. Let us cooperate so that hunger may be recognised as a paramount problem and solved.

On the occasion of the World Food Day, the European Union too stressed its commitment in the struggle against hunger and poverty: "This day must serve to remind us that we must do all that we can to avoid that over one billion people suffer from hunger. In order to meet this challenge, the EU food agency, with 1 billion Euro funding, is obtaining quick and concrete results by distributing to small farmers in developing countries the seeds and fertilisers they need to improve agricultural yield. We will treasure the experience gained with our food agency to guarantee that the obligation undertaken at the L'Aquila G8 summit is equally effective in fighting world hunger" was the comment by Karel De Gucht, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid.

In one note it is said that the EU has placed food safety, agriculture and rural development at the centre of the aid to developing countries, offering strong and quick support to cope with global hunger. The commitment taken this year within the framework of the L'Aquila initiative on global food safety is a tangible example of this. With 2.7 billion Euro made available, the EU is the biggest donor for that initiative. The fact that already 85 % of the one-billion Euro food endowment was paid shows that the EU is strongly committed to improving the living conditions of the poorest people in the world and is keeping its promises.
Great Britain. The Food Standards Agency launches a campaign for the reduction of salt consumption

“Is your food full of it? Salt”. This is the slogan of the new campaign launched by the Food Standards Agency the UK government department that deals with food safety and health. The initiative is aimed at raising consumer awareness on the quantity of salt taken with the food they purchase. The salt contents of food products vary from one brand to another. For this reason the campaign promotes a more informed consumption through labelling and choice of products. According to an Agency survey, 77% of consumers ignore that breakfast bread and cereals are food items that provide most of the salt taken in the daily diet.

“Salt consumption – said Rosemary Hignett, head of the nutrition division of the Food Standards Agency – is decreasing; however, if we are to reach the goal of reducing it to a maximum of 6 grammes per day for adults, and less than that for children, consumers need to know how much salt they take in with their food. We are not recommending consumers to give up eating certain products, on the contrary, we do encourage them to eat bread and cereals, as they are essential staples, but we invite everyone to read labels and choose products with lower salt contents”.

In particular, the survey carried out by the Agency involved more than 2,000 people in Great Britain. According to the survey, 40% of the interviewees believes that supermarket branded products contain more salt than other brands. Sometimes the cheapest products are those with less salt contents. Snacks, ready-made dishes and meat based products are the food items that are believed to have the highest salt contents, while 85% of the people in the sample tend to buy always the same brands (as in the case of bread, ketchup and cereals), although 26% of these said they would be willing to change if they new about other products with less salt on the market.

Nestlé, the Nutrikid project goes on

To promote health, well-being, proper nutrition and an active lifestyle among children, families and teachers. This is the goal of the second edition of the project entitled Nutrikid – The Secrets in Food, a project about teaching how to eat correctly sponsored by Nestlé Italiana in cooperation with the Nutrition Foundation of Italy and the publishing house Giunti Progetti Educativi.

The project will involve more than 70,000 children in an educational course aimed at disclosing the mainstays of a correct lifestyle: a balanced nutrition and continuous physical exercise. In particular, children will learn about the seven food groups that compose the food pyramid, their various functions, their benefits and how often should they be eaten. The towns involved are Genova, Rome, Bari and the province of Milan for a total of about 3,000 primary school fifth-grade classes. Furthermore, as in the past year, all the schools involved in the project outside these areas will be able to apply for the kit by connecting to the website www.nestle.it/nutrikids.
At the end of the school year it will be possible to register in the contest “Nutrikids at the discovery of food”. The participating classes, taking advantage of their knowledge about the food pyramid, will have to conceive, write or design a commercial aimed at convincing other children to follow correct eating habits.