

PRESS RELEASE

Using sensory science to place the consumer at the heart of product innovation

360° of innovation: Redefining the future of innovation in the food & beverage industry

11th May 2016, Vitafoods Europe, Geneva: Leatherhead Food Research, a leader in technical solutions and consulting expertise in the world of food & drink, announces it is presenting at Vitafoods Europe on the importance of placing the consumer at the heart of product innovation as part of its 360° of innovation initiative.

Sensory science is used by companies to encourage consumers to respond to a product or brand through the use of sensory cues including sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing. It is so powerful that it can create subconscious triggers about a product and can be used to help with product improvement, quality control, production process change, competitor benchmarking and new product development.

Consumer and sensory science is a key part of Leatherhead's new 360° of innovation initiative launched in conjunction with its sister companies Oakland Innovation and Sagentia. It aims to redefine innovation in the food & beverage sector and is being showcased at Vitafoods Europe, taking place in Geneva this week.

As part of the launch, Cindy Beeren, VP, Sensory, Consumer & Market Insight at Leatherhead, is today presenting on the Vitafoods Centre Stage 14:30 – 14:50 on sensory-focused design. She will be discussing the use of consumer insight as a driver for product development.

Cindy comments: "At Leatherhead, we believe product development has to be a holistic process which considers the consumer, the market conditions and the product concept. This can only come from a close collaboration between sensory & consumer scientists who understand their consumers and product developers who have a high degree of skill and knowledge in ingredient and product behaviour to ensure product stability and microbiological safety."

360° of Innovation aims at delivering strategic thinking together with practical know-how to help food & beverage companies de-risk their innovation process. It supports the full innovation lifecycle, from market landscaping and opportunity identification, through product concepting, supply chain concerns, regulatory and food safety aspects, and finally production and post launch support.

Chris Wells, Managing Director for Leatherhead Food Research, comments: “The food & beverage industry really is facing some fundamental challenges which could change the industry beyond recognition. We are seeing a focus on ingredients and a growing trend towards healthy foods that promote physical and mental health and challenges to existing supply chains and business models. This is all happening against a backdrop of food safety, quality, regulatory and cost pressures. There is now great opportunity for companies in the sector to respond to these changes and they can look for inspiration both in-sector and from outside of the industry where similar technology-led changes are taking place.”

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Melissa Shone
Director of Marketing, Science Group plc
T: +44 1223 875205
E: melissa.shone@sciencegroup.com

Notes to editors:

About Leatherhead Food Research

Founded in 1919, Leatherhead Food Research has been a trusted partner to the food industry for nearly a century, offering an unparalleled breadth and depth of experience to help food and beverage companies, large and small, innovate and succeed. Covering the full product lifecycle, services range from offerings such as consumer insight, sensory testing and ground-breaking ingredient and product innovation to expert advisory work around food safety and global industry regulations. Leatherhead also operates an internationally recognised membership programme which represents a who's who of the food and drinks industry. Alongside Member support and project work, Leatherhead's industry professionals deliver cutting-edge research in areas that stimulate long term commercial benefit and growth for the food and drink industry.

Leatherhead Food Research is the trading name of Leatherhead Research Limited, a Science Group (AIM:SAG) company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on the Group's in-depth science and technology capability. It has six offices globally, two dedicated, UK-based R&D innovation centres and more than 350 employees. Other Science Group companies include Oakland Innovation, Sagentia and OTM Consulting.

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