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## PRESS RELEASE

### Fortunes of cheese at a turning point

Cheese is at Day 1 of a new era of opportunity. After 40 years of being demonized for its fat and salt content cheese stands at the threshold of a turnaround that will see it re-established as a natural and healthy wholefood, like many other foods before it, from nuts to eggs.

For the food industry it's great news that science has established that not only is cheese not harmful, with no link to cardiovascular disease or to elevated blood pressure, in fact it could be beneficial thanks to its high protein and calcium content.

"With new science reaching a tipping point, cheese could be the next naturally functional success story," predicts Julian Mellentin, director of New Nutrition Business, which profiles the cheese opportunity in its June 2015 report.

"People in the dairy industry have a once-in-a-career opportunity to take a dairy food that's been out of favour for decades and reposition it, with new snack formats and positive health messages," he adds. "With the right marketing strategy dairy companies can create a massive surge in demand for cheese."

There is huge potential for growth in cheese consumption in many countries. The US, for example, has half the per capita cheese consumption of France's 26.3kg – a country with one of the lowest rates of heart disease in the world (in fact, research suggests effects of cheese on gut flora could help explain the famous French Paradox).

Even a 5% per annum increase in cheese consumption in the US should be achievable – bearing in mind that almonds were achieving 30% growth (admittedly off a smaller base). Other countries with low cheese consumption are Australia, Canada, Brazil, Belgium, Denmark, Israel and Sweden.

Cheese has long been held back by fears about saturated fat content, sodium levels, and weight gain. Now those negative perceptions look set to change as advancing science reveals that:

- The sodium in cheese does not increase blood pressure because of the "whole food matrix" in which it is delivered.
- Cheese does not lead to weight gain and in fact may have the opposite effect. As a 2011 Norwegian study concludes: "Since saturated fat is a major cheese component, it might be questioned whether subjects with a frequent use of cheese would put on more weight than low consumers of cheese. Our consistent finding in all age groups of both men and

women, except in the 75-year-old subjects, of a negative correlation between cheese intake and BMI is not in favour of the idea that frequent cheese intake leads to increased body weight. In fact, the opposite might be suggested from the present results.”

With these negatives removed, other benefits of cheese will become clearer to consumers:

- 1. Dental health benefits:** As one of the least cavity-forming foods, and one that contains many beneficial nutrients for teeth, cheese is recommended by both the British Dental Association and the Australian Dental Association.
- 2. Low in lactose:** Cheese contains less than half the lactose of semi-skimmed milk and yoghurt.
- 3. Good nutritional profile:** Compared with semi-skimmed milk and yoghurt, Cheddar cheese has more than 3 times the protein, less than half the carbs, more than 3 times the calcium and the highest magnesium, zinc, vitamin A and vitamin B2 content. Cheese is also high in vitamin K2, which is known to have anti-inflammatory effects and be protective against atherosclerosis and osteoporosis.
- 4. Taste and variety:** Like dark chocolate or red wine, cheese is a better-for-you food that tastes good. Rising butter sales show that there are already consumers saying ‘I don’t need to worry about dairy fat’.

The evolution of science gives every reason to believe that cheese could be the next big food turnaround, just as nuts, once demonized for their fat content, turned out to contain beneficial fats and have gone on to become a snacking success story.

How quickly that happens depends on how effectively industry introduces consumers to the new science, how quickly it re-educates health professionals who cling to old ideas about cheese, and how willing companies are to be innovative and create new and convenient products that revitalize consumer interest in this traditional wholefood.

“The real challenge for cheese is not a lack of science demonstrating its benefits,” says Mellentin. “The challenge is whether the industry has the courage to step up and present the new science to health professionals, and to consumers, and – like the nut industry – to press forward with innovative new formats for cheese.”

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The attached graphic (which may be used for publication and is supplied in JPEG) shows that the health benefits of cheese touch on six of the 10 Key Trends driving the business of food, nutrition and health.
2. A complete list of references relating to the health benefits of cheese is available from Kine Bjoralt at [kine.bjoralt@new-nutrition.com](mailto:kine.bjoralt@new-nutrition.com).
3. Julian Mellentin is one of the world's few international specialists in the business of food, nutrition and health. He is director of [New Nutrition Business](#) which provides case studies and analysis of success and failure in the global nutrition business and is used by more than 1,700 corporate subscribers in 42 countries.
4. For more information about New Nutrition Business, or to arrange an interview with Julian Mellentin, contact Kine Bjoralt at [kine.bjoralt@new-nutrition.com](mailto:kine.bjoralt@new-nutrition.com)
5. Visit our website <http://www.new-nutrition.com> or follow us on Twitter [@NewNutritionB](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for our latest updates.