

Region: East of England

Date: May 2024

Committee Update

Dear Members,

We hope you are keeping well and looking forward to the bank holiday weekend!

Firstly, we would like to apologise for cancelling our Regional Business Seminar that was scheduled for 1st May. It was a hard decision to make but felt it was the appropriate decision due to low numbers. Although disappointing, this gives us renewed focus to look at ways we can create a range of networking opportunities for our valued members.

We are pleased to confirm our **East of England Regional AGM** will be held virtually and is scheduled for **Wednesday 5th June 2024** at time **3pm**. The link will be circulated shortly.

We are also looking at hosting a **virtual Business Seminar** at the end of September as we understand it is hard leaving the kitchen or office to attend an event in person.

The committee would like to extend our congratulations to Michael Hales who was recently awarded the freedom of the city of London in recognition of his 35 years' service to school meals within London. We would also like to say a big congratulations to former LACA Chair Jacquie Blake for receiving an OBE for services to education.

We would like to welcome Rachel Johnson from Pelican Procurement to the Regional Committee. Please do let us know if you are interested in becoming a Committee Member.

Our committee is as follows:

Natasha Carver	Regional Chair
Jill Taylor	Regional Secretary
Rodney Lankester	Regional Treasurer and Events
Stuart Clarke	Committee Member and Director of LACA
Clare Jordan	Committee Member and Marketing
Vicki Hislop	Committee Member
Wesley Sims	Committee Member
Rachel Johnson	Committee Member

Update from Natasha:

We are already halfway through 2024 and nearly at the end of our academic year, time really does fly. We have seen many challenges through school meal funding vs food inflation, along with staff retention and these are hot topics being discussed at Westminster and the main event in July, a date not to be missed.



As a region we are always wanting to hear your thoughts and views along with ways we can help support our schools catering, please feel free to contact the committee with any questions you may have.

We are always looking to grow our regional membership so please feel free to recommend others or get in touch with our committee on how we can support. We love hearing from our members especially with all the great work you all do, please let us know your good news stories along with any pictures you may have, please forward to Clare at clare.jordan@norsegroup.co.uk.

LACA Main Event

We are counting down to the LACA Main Event which is taking place on Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th July at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole.

The theme of this year's LACA Main Event is "**Levelling Up School Food**". With significant cost increases, staffing shortages, and funding shortfalls, providing nutritious meals to children has become increasingly challenging. In response to these challenges, LACA has launched a campaign urging all political parties to commit to a minimum funding level of PS3 per meal (index linked) in their general election manifestos.

Delegates booking places for the Main Event will have access to all areas of the event including forum speaker sessions, LACA Live and the workshops. There are also options to add to accommodation and dinners to your booking.

The LACA School Food Show is a free-to-attend exhibition of more than 160 suppliers. Visitors to the School Food Show can also attend the live demonstrations and interactive workshops.

SCOTY 2024

Wishing luck to Aron Jordan from Doucecroft School in Colchester who is our Regional Finalist for this year's SCOTY!

We look forward to seeing how Aron gets on with his dishes at the National Final in July.



Finishing Touches



PROMOTING
CULINARY TALENT



This fantastic competition provides entrants with the opportunity to show off their skills which would not normally be seen during their everyday profession. There are 12 categories this year and the judging will be taking place on Thursday 4th July. Entries must be made online by Friday 31st May 2024 using the LACA website. It will be great to see lots of entries from the Eastern region!

Celebrating Success



Norse Group's Catering team recently launched a competition across their Norfolk Primary Schools, inviting children to design a school lunch.

With 206 entries received in total, the judges had the challenging task of selecting a winner and decided on Addie's 'Super Six Veggie Curry'.

Addie's curry was recreated by the kitchen team and served to children on Mr Stroodles Eco Tableware to coincide with Earth Day.

Judging from the comments around the dining room, the curry was a big hit!

"We welcomed this initiative at our school and liked the collaboration with Norse. It helped open conversations about school meal choices which gives children a voice. It also linked in with the national curriculum teaching children about the importance of active and healthy lifestyles." Headteacher, Norfolk Primary School. A successful and very tasty collaboration all round.

HCL are thrilled to announce that one of their many talented employees, Lisa Miles, was recently honoured with a prestigious Gold Award at the Salon Culinare competition within the Sugarcraft (SC4) - Decorated Celebration Cake. This marks a significant milestone in Lisa's culinary journey.



Lisa's journey to success began in 2020 when she first entered the Salon Culinare, spurred on by the encouragement of David Gower (former HCL Executive Chef) and Kirsty Yearsley (Customer Engagement Manager), following her remarkable performance at LACA the previous year. Despite it being her debut, Lisa's talent shone brightly as she clinched the Silver Award. Determined to push her boundaries, Lisa set her sights on the Gold Award.

Months of dedication and passion went into crafting her masterpiece, a cake that truly reflected her unique style and personality. The moment of truth arrived and to Lisa's utter delight, her cake stood adorned with the coveted Gold Award, a testament to her unwavering commitment and talent. Going head-to-head with seasoned professionals in the catering and sugarcraft industry, Lisa's victory was nothing short of extraordinary.

Market Report from Meatline

Overall

The UK meat industry faces a complex landscape of political, economic, social and environmental pressures.

Collaboration, innovation, understanding and adaptability are essential for its continued success.

The recent introduction of the Import Tax and levy on meat and poultry from the EU means an additional cost of around £245 per product per importer. This is broken down into a charge for a Health Certificate £80, Export Document £30, Import Document £40 and Border control costs £95. Each pallet averages around 1000kg, suggesting an average price increase of 25p/kg on all meat imported from Europe. This stealth tax makes UK produce more affordable to processors and will increase demand thus the price of all UK meat and poultry over the coming months. This compounded with fact the UK government has failed to secure a free trade deal with Canada and the USA is good news for UK farmers yet will pull the purse strings on consumers with prices forecast to rise.



With the UEFA Euro 2024 kicking off on 14/06/2024 prices on Meat, Poultry and Deli are expected to rise and remain high throughout the summer due to a temporary shortening of the market.

UK/Irish Beef

Prices are to remain firm, not due to a lack of cattle! Farmers fields are full of lush grass brought on by the inclement weather meaning there is an abundance of free food. They are being 'brought on', gaining weight at no extra cost to the farmer, therefore product is remaining tight. If the weather improves the situation may change with more product available. Prices could dip, however, rising prices for all ancillaries in all industry is likely to negate this.

UK Poultry

The market is strong and rising with prices being pushed up due to import taxation and tariffs. Making up 50% of protein consumed in the UK prices are expected to align with inflation currently at 2.3pc (Telegraph 22/05/24) its lowest point in three years.

EU Poultry

Additional administration costs and taxes makes the UK market less attractive to EU exporters, many of the smaller companies choosing not to export their produce, this shorts product availability in the UK increasing the price of imported poultry. The Embargo imposed by the UK government on French duck due to vaccination against Avian-Flu means prices remain sky high.

UK Pork

Conversely favourable exchange rate and quality produce make UK pork attractive to EU markets. With product being available and a high percentage going for export prices are expected to remain firm, rising for the duration of Euro 2024.

UK Lamb

Lamb prices, especially fore quarter meat is extremely high with shoulders being more expensive than legs due to the requirement of the Asian markets. UK Lamb is valued in the EU with local slaughterhouses reporting export volumes of around 40%. As the Spring Lamb is brought off the field's product availability will increase hopefully providing some relief in the market price.

Members Competition

With the Olympic Games Paris 2024 not far away (26th July – 11th August), we thought it would be fun to invite our members to design a dish that can be enjoyed whilst watching the Olympic games! What dish would you make to fuel your squad through the sporting events? Would you theme it for a different country or theme it around a particular event? The judges are looking for something fun, creative, and tasty! We just need a typed recipe and photo of the dish. Entries to be sent to clare.jordan@norsegroup.co.uk with a deadline of 1st July 2024. Gift vouchers will be awarded to our Gold, Silver and Bronze winners!

Caterers and schools, we would love to hear from you with any feedback, good news stories or photos of your school lunches!

Suppliers and manufacturers, we would love to hear from you if you are interested in advertising in the next newsletter. Contact clare.jordan@norsegroup.co.uk for more information.

Finally, the committee would like to wish you a nice May half-term if you have any time off and we hope to see many of you at LACA's Main Event in July!