



**Press Release**

**Thursday 05 November 2009**

### **Regional Food Group Puts the Spotlight on Healthy Eating During National School Meals Week**

HEART of ENGLAND fine foods (HEFF) is supporting National School Meals Week in Birmingham and the Black Country by encouraging schools to look at alternative ways to provide children with healthy food and drink.

National School Meals Week will run from Monday 9 to Friday 13 November and provides a platform for school caterers to drive up school meal numbers and promote the importance of healthy eating to young children and parents. HEFF, the regional food group for the West Midlands, is supporting the scheme by offering assistance to Birmingham and Black Country schools through two of its projects which aim to make healthy eating interesting and fun whilst also supporting regional food and drink producers.

HEFF run two different schemes to encourage children to eat healthy, regionally produced food and drink. The V machine is a healthy vending machine stocked with food and drink that meets Government guidelines for healthy eating in schools, steering children away from the traditionally vended high sugar and high fat snacks. Products include nuts and pulses, yoghurts, sandwiches, baguettes and wraps, fruit juice, milk and fruit (fresh and dried).

The other scheme is the S bar which is a smoothie bar using locally produced fruit and vegetables and milk to make delicious smoothies on site. This also meets Government guidelines.

The International School and Community College, Tile Cross, Birmingham, has an S Bar which catering manager Chris Hayes says is proving extremely popular with the pupils.

"The smoothie bar is fantastic and we've had a great response from the children. We can make healthy smoothies and juices and use seasonal produce from local suppliers," he said.  
"I feel it's really important to support the local producers and to reduce our carbon footprint."

As well as generating additional income for the school the scheme aims to educate pupils on seasonality of food, food miles and the benefits of eating healthy snacks. The V machine and S bar equipment is also heavily subsidised by HEFF.

Sophie Gethin, HEFF Schools Project Manager, said: "We work very closely with schools across the region to deliver these projects and work under strict Government school food guidelines fitting in with its three-year plan to transform school meals and to ban all foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar."

For more information about HEFF and the schools projects mentioned please call the HEFF office on 01746 785185, email [office@heff.co.uk](mailto:office@heff.co.uk) or visit [www.heff.co.uk](http://www.heff.co.uk)

For more information about National School Meals Week visit [www.iloveschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.iloveschoolmeals.co.uk)