

Food manufacturers can tackle obesity in their own way

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The European Commission's obesity platform, which forms the basis of the recent white paper on obesity related health issues, comes to some "strange conclusions" small food producers continue to argue.



Building on work undertaken by the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, the White Paper on A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity Related Health Issues aims to introduce an integrated approach to tackling health problems, including through diet, education and the encouraging of physical activity.

"We don't want to refuse the Commission's intentions", says Ludger Fischer of UEAPME, "but as a small producer you cannot launch big campaigns or education platforms".

"Our big value is that we give personal contact with the customer, we can advise on how to eat the right foodstuffs".

But small food manufacturers are worried that the approach preferred by the Commission is unrealistic in its scope. "It comes to some strange conclusions in encouraging so-called healthy behaviour", continues Fischer. "It's very difficult to change people's behaviour, their daily way of eating".

Small food producers make up the largest part of the sector in Europe, and provide a wide variety of products, Fischer insists. "They contribute to a balanced diet, which is a key factor in tackling obesity, thanks to the variety of safe food they provide".

"This is their contribution to solving the behavioural problem that is to the root of obesity in western culture".