



Media release

20 February 2013

The Chip Group Ltd

Matamata selected for 'Town Makeover' in NZ initiative

It's already known as the home of Hobbiton, now Matamata is set to go on the map as being the 'Best Chip Town in New Zealand' too.

The town has been selected for a pioneering initiative to ensure every outlet selling deep-fried chips cooks them to best practice standards for the food service industry – reducing fat and salt content and ensuring the crispest, most delicious result.

Food and Nutrition educator Glenda Gourley, Chair of The Chip Group, which works to improve the nutritional status of deep-fried chips sold in New Zealand, said that every hot chip retailer in Matamata will now be invited to take part in training, with organisers aiming for 100 per cent participation.

The group has been working with Matamata Council, Matamata Public Relations Association and health promoters Heart Foundation, Sport Waikato, and Pohlen Hospital on the scheme.

“We selected Matamata because it has 20 retailers selling hot chips in a relatively small area, catering both for residents and the many tourists visiting the area,” said Glenda.

“It is a very exciting opportunity for retailers too because chips cooked to best industry practice are crisper, tastier and lower in energy. With everyone cooking to those standards, it really will be the best chip town in New Zealand.”

Chip Group researchers have found chips in New Zealand, not cooked to industry standards, contain up to 20 per cent fat, compared to only seven to nine per cent for chips cooked to industry standards.

'Mystery chip shoppers' have already visited every one of the 20 outlets selling hot chips in Matamata, collecting samples for laboratory testing. The Chip Group will be repeating the exercise for comparison, following the training, and expects there to be a significant reduction in the fat content of hot chips sold in the town.

“New Zealanders eat millions of portions of chips each week,” said Glenda. “By training hot chip retailers to reduce the fat content of their chips, simply through improving their cooking techniques, we can ensure better chips – and that's good for those retailers' businesses too.”

The Tips for Better Chips training seminar will be run by Kate Underwood, The Chip Group's training and education manager, alongside New Zealand's champion chippie Michael Huang, owner of Oppies Takeaway in Rotorua, winner of the New Zealand's Best Chip Shop title.

The session will cover everything from chip and portion sizes to salt use, the best oils to use and at what temperature and how to 'bang, shake and hang' baskets following frying to ensure as much fat is drained from the chips as possible.

Participants will receive a certificate to display in their shop showing they have taken part in training to serve healthier chips.

The Chip Group is made up of a range of food service industry providers and suppliers as well as support from health and Government agencies such as the Heart Foundation and The Ministry of Health.

For more information about the Chip Group and the 2013 Town Make-over please visit www.chipgroup.co.nz

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Background on the Chip Group

The Chip Group is made up of a range of players in the food service industry, such as potato growers, chip manufacturers, oil suppliers, equipment suppliers and media. We also have the support of multiple health and government members such as the Heart Foundation and The Ministry of Health.

Our overriding goal is to improve the nutritional status of deep-fried chips served by New Zealand foodservice* by reducing fat (total and saturated) and salt content.

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