

## Advertising Standards Authority case ref. A17-379429

Complaint correspondence between the Real Bread Campaign and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regarding Tesco's television and online advertising campaign 'Food love stories: The bread perfectionists'

### From the Real Bread Campaign to the ASA, 13 February 2017

We believe that the average viewer will understand this advertisement to mean that Tesco loaves are made:

- In small batches, mainly by hand
- Using only three natural ingredients

The advertisement shows two people, who the Tesco website states are their 'Bread Perfectionists' Rob and Mike.

The first says that "I'm the white sliced man." The second is then shown making a small batch of loaves by hand using methods, equipment and quantities to be found in a traditional craft bakery. He says "in all my years working for Tesco I'd say there can't be anything more satisfying than watching flour, yeast and water turn into perfectly formed loaves."

Clearly the intention of this advertisement is to make the viewer understand that these are the ingredients and methods used to make Tesco loaves.

The truth is that the bakery and baking shown in the advertisement are not at all representative of the industrial methods used in the vast, automated production units that manufacture millions of loaves each day for multiple retailers. The vast majority of white sliced loaves sold by Tesco are produced in large batches, in highly mechanised factories, often untouched by hand at all.

No loaf sold by Tesco is made using only the three, natural ingredients stated by the baker, who surely must know that all also contain salt. More importantly, we believe that most, if not all, Tesco loaves are also made using at least one artificial additive. In common with other Tesco own brand loaves, from its very cheapest 'everyday value' and mid-range 'stay fresh' white sliced loaves, the 'finest' white cob glimpsed at the end of the advertisement and named below the video on its website is also made using a number of unnecessary ingredients and artificial additives.

In the case of the named loaf, not including any processing aids that might be used but not declared on the label, the full list is: Wheat Flour (Wheat Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin), Water, Sourdough (6%) (Wheat Flour (Wheat Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin), Water, Sourdough Culture (Wheat), Yeast, Salt), Salt, Yeast, Soya Flour, Palm Oil, Rapeseed Oil, Emulsifier (Mono- and Di-Acetyltartaric Esters of Mono- and Di-Glycerides of Fatty Acids), Flour Treatment Agent (Ascorbic Acid).

As such, we believe this advertisement to be misleading.

### From the ASA to the Real Bread Campaign, 3 March 2017

Thank you for contacting us about Tesco's advert and for your patience whilst we have been considering your complaint.

We asked the [ASA Council](#) to make a decision on the issue you raised, however after careful consideration, they have decided that no further action should be taken.

### The Issue

We received complaints that Tesco's ad was likely to mislead because it implied the loaves were made by hand in small batches and because it misleadingly implied that flour, yeast and water are the only ingredients in their loaves.

## The advertising rules

Advertisements should contain nothing that is likely to mislead. We base our decisions on the content of the ad, when and where it appears, the audience and the type of product or service being advertised.

You can find a copy of the Advertising Codes on our [website](#).

## The ASA Council's decision – No further investigation

1. Council noted that the ad featured shots of bread being hand kneaded and baked, and that it was about the bakers' passion for baking bread, but they also noted that it also featured shots of loaves on a conveyor belt in a factory setting. They also noted the shots of packaged sliced loaves on a conveyor belt, which they considered communicated a level of industrialisation in the process. Given that context, and because the ad was for a well-known large-scale retailer, they considered that viewers were unlikely to be misled into thinking that Tesco loaves were handmade.

2. Alongside the ad's depictions of industrially baked loaves, Council considered that viewers would generally be aware of Tesco's positioning as a large nationwide chain that required large-scale, industrial processes in order to stock their outlets daily with a number of different types of loaves. While the baker referred to three ingredients in particular, they considered viewers were likely to understand that they were the most fundamental ones rather than that they were the only ingredients included in Tesco bread products. They concluded that viewers were unlikely to be misled into thinking that Tesco's loaves were made only of flour, yeast and water.

## Action taken

We have made the advertiser aware of the issues that were brought to our attention by yourself and others in case they wish to take on-board the information provided when creating their ads in the future.

Thank you for contacting us with your view. If you want to know more about the ASA you can visit our website, [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk).

## From the Real Bread Campaign to the ASA, 7 March 2017

Given the lack of any comedic or fantasy styling, we believe that it is the clear intention of the advertiser to lead viewers to believe that what is shown and said is an accurate, factual portrayal of the actual ingredients and process used to make its own-brand loaves.

This is not the case.

- The exterior shot is *not* of the production bakery in which the retailed loaves are made.
- The craft bakery style equipment and methods shown are *not used at all* in the mass production of the retailed loaves.
- And surely listing just three natural ingredients is, by omission, a *grossly misleading misrepresentation of the truth*? The reality is that recipes of many – perhaps the majority – of the advertiser's loaves (including the one actually depicted) are in no way this simple and natural.

How can the ASA believe that the majority of viewers are likely to understand that the advertiser's loaves are manufactured in modern, automated industrial units, untouched by hand but sometimes laced with artificial additives (and perhaps undeclared processing aids), when the advertisement presents a mythical image of them being crafted by hand in small batches the traditional way in a lovingly-restored brick building, with not a whiff of Mono- and Di-Acetyltartaric Esters of Mono- and Di-Glycerides of Fatty Acids? After all, is the latter not how the average person understands and believes bread is made?

In light of these facts, and the clear discrepancy between portrayal and reality of the advertiser's loaf fabrication, we urge the ASA to please review this case.

## From the ASA to the Real Bread Campaign, 21 March 2017

In making their decision, Council took into account how they considered the average consumer was likely to appreciate how bread is manufactured for a chain as large as Tesco. Whilst they noted the romanticised context in which loaves were shown being prepared, they concluded that this was unlikely to lead viewers to believe that Tesco's loaves are all prepared using this method in this setting. They considered that the references to water, flour and yeast would be understood as relating to the three most fundamental ingredients rather than as being a statement that Tesco loaves only contain these three ingredients.

I hope this sufficiently addresses your queries. Please visit our [website](#) if you would like more information about the independent review process.