Food Industry Vital for Haiti's Recovery

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With ever increasing scrutiny on food manufacturing, it’s easy to forget that this is an industry that feeds us all in increasingly efficient ways. And in the aftermath of Monday’s devastating earthquake in Haiti, food companies are coming to the rescue—in more ways than you might expect. A moneycontrol.com article [1] posted today broke down corporate donations to the earthquake relief effort, and those from food companies include:

1. Kraft Foods Foundation is donating $200,000 to the American Red Cross for relief efforts. The company also said it has a special 2:1 match for employees' donations up to $100,000—bringing the total matching component to $300,000.
2. The PepsiCo Foundation said it will donate $1 million to the earthquake victims and that the food and beverage company PepsiCo will provide Quaker products as well as bottled water and Gatorade for the disaster victims through its bottlers in Florida and the Dominican Republic.
3. General Mills Foundation said it would contribute $250,000 to support the disaster relief and rebuilding efforts.
4. McDonald's Corp and its franchise Arcos Dorados will together contribute at least $1 million to help the victims of the earthquake.
5. Yum Brands Inc said it is directing $500,000 from its World Hunger Relief global effort to provide food for the earthquake victims.
6. Nestle Waters North America will donate $1 million in bottled water products to support disaster relief efforts.

And Kellogg, too, has pledged $250,000 [2] for the victims of Monday’s earthquake.

But in addition to the donations directly from food giants, food companies have another important role to play in this rescue and relief effort. As the Haitian civilization has come to a screeching halt in the days following the disaster, the people trapped there are going to rely on food relief shipped in from outside the country. Such shipments will require the kinds of prepackaged and non-perishable

food items that food manufacturers in the U.S. and across the world are producing.

It seems now that the real challenge is going to be delivering this aid and food to the regions that need it the most. In this morning's article on CBS.com, "No Food, No Water, No Help [3]" reporter Jeff Glor says that with no official presence in Port-au-Prince and no indication as to the arrival of food or water, the people of the city are starting to grow desperate. And the excessive air-traffic into the island, which holds the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as reported this morning on Businessweek.com [4] may hamper the delivery of those necessities to the Haitian people.

As relief workers determine how best to get aid to the people who need it, it's worth noting that because of the efficiencies built into modern food manufacturing, the actual production of the transportable, non-perishable food that is now being sent from nations around the globe is a step in this relief effort that was already completed before the quake ever hit. And the manufactured, long-shelf-life products sent to Haiti by the U.S. and other countries will very likely save many lives.

As a final note, the relief effort in Haiti has a long way to go. For what it's worth, I think NPR has provided the best catalog of international charities pitching in to help [5].

Has your company pitched in to help Haiti? Tell us about it: krystal.gabert@advantagemedia.com [6].

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