CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?

Vitally

2. How would we know when we had got there? What would success look like?

Purchasing of pre-prepared food would be down and sale of 'ingredients' would be up.

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

Visions always sound a bit wooly, in this instance there is nothing wrong with what is expressed, but it really doesn't communicate the scale of the problem that there will be in persuading the population that they can afford, and find the time, to shun pre-prepared meals, value burgers, basics lasagnes etc.

4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

Things that would improve my food options:
- Supermarkets selling more catchweight rather than pre-weighed produce. If I can but only the amount of onions I need I can better afford carrots as well and am more likely to get them all used before they go off. Large pack sizes of perishables generates food waste.
- Independents such as Bakers, Butchers, Fishmongers and Greengrocers would be open in the evenings. Seriously, this is the biggie. Small shops complain about being driven out by the supermarkets but are pretty much only open weekdays and half a day on weekends. Few people have access to fridge storage at work for lunchtime shopping and that leaves Saturday morning for those that work standard office hours to get to the small traders. Govt policy that encouraged small traders to change their opening hours would make a vast difference. And it needn’t even be a case of longer hours for them, they could just shift their hours to later in the day, or have a siesta… anything other than blame the customers for not being available when it suits the traders.

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?
I think you need to have clear and communicable ideals for the changes, not just ‘healthy is good’ if that seems beyond reach for people. For example, Scotland is the MS capital of the world and it seems increasingly likely that it may be connected to Vit D deficiency, so we need to look at the Scotland-specific health needs as well as the messages from more general literature.

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?

By finding ways to make the solutions Scottish ones. Not tartan branded, but suited to the patterns of life, commuting, shopping and health needs HERE.

7. In what areas should indicators be set to check we are on track towards our goals?

Ensure that research into shopping availability takes opening hours into account as well as geography. This is probably even more important in areas where many people travel to work, so shops in a peripheral housing estate which close at 6pm, probably still don’t much serve a working person who doesn’t get back to their neighbourhood until 6 themselves. The more people are prevented from shopping locally, the less sustainable the local businesses are and the whole community suffers when they fail.

8. What are your views on the different approaches that could be taken to help us become a Good Food Nation?

Don’t fall into the Advertising trap of always showing vibrant, glossy, best possible presentation of food. Don’t talk about food as if every meal must be a fabulous and exiting adventure. I understand why you do, and you have done it in this document to an extent, but it doesn’t look or sound like the real food that people can afford or that they can prepare, particularly if they are poor.
Let REAL FOOD be what you show as well as what you promote, understand that food is also fuel and that sometimes it just needs to be quick and easy, that sometimes it needs to comfort.
Tinned veg and frozen veg are healthy and nutritious as well as convenient and always on hand, their use can help minimise waste.
Demystifying cooking is vital and not something that all cookery shows manage. Jamie Oliver’s Food Tube You Tube channel does a good job in that regard but it could be good to have something of a similar flavour but Scottish. Use the media, but without preaching.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:
   - Food in the public sector
   - A children’s food policy
   - Local food
• Good food choices and
• Continued economic growth?

No,

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

I think we need to start by remembering how we used to eat, and by understanding more about people’s real access to food and shopping resources rather than their theoretical access. While I understand that we need to ensure children get good nutrition and a good food foundation, we need to guard against the idea that Children’s Food is a category all its own. It is possible that part of our problem with food attitudes today lies in the rise not only of the ‘turkey twizzler’ as it were, but in the development commercially of the idea of ‘children’s menus’ which encouraged children to eat poorer quality food, less recognisable as its constituent parts. A ‘Child’s portion’ used to be just a smaller serving of the main menu item and I believe that that is something Government could play a role in encouraging restaurateurs and café owners to move back to.

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

A fightback against EC regulation No 536/2013

12. What else should be considered?

How we can use more out our quality fisheries catch at home rather than it being a premium export item.

13. What steps do you plan to take to help Scotland on the journey toward becoming a Good Food Nation – in the next month and in the next 12 months?

Not sure, got any suggestions for individuals? I will carry on trying to eat more ‘real food’ and prepare it for other people, that creates a tiny additional demand on shops for ingredients rather than ‘dishes’. I'll carry on making my own bread from live cultures to help my own health and avoid the horror that is Chorelywood process product. I'll carry on buying venison from the local source who has a sideline in keeping deer down in commercial forestry. I'll carry on using the internet to help me work out how to cook well and easily (did you know you can cook porridge overnight in a slow cooker?) and take the best of what I discover in other countries and translate that into food I can produce at home; I can’t get the same fish or bread I had in Istanbul, but I can take the idea of a fresh fried fish sandwich and use a herring in a Morning roll… I can take the idea of Birchen Muesli and make it to suit my lactose intolerant needs.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?
You emailed me because I had responded to an earlier stage consultation, which I had heard about on BBC Scotland.