CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

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   It is important for the reasons given in the discussion document, especially Section 6 – Unfinished Business: poor diet, disconnected from food, poor food culture, food waste and national food security

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

   • Community health would have improved tangibly (measurable),
   • obesity would be history (measurable),
   • the deep fried Mars Bar would never be referred to amusingly,
   • “grabbing a bite to eat” would be derided as a thing of the past
   • food waste would be reduced appreciably (measurable),
   • ready meals will be only for those who really can’t rather than won’t cook (measurable),
   • local independent shops such as butchers, greengrocers and fishmongers would reappear
   • people would be ‘connected with food’ and truly appreciate how it is produced, they would be able to enjoy preparing it and sharing it socially through cooking (measurable from increased fresh food and reduced processed food consumption; greater participation in food events, farmers markets, etc; enhanced knowledge through formal education systems from primary to higher education)
   • more artisan producers of everything from vegetables to hams

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

   The overall vision I certainly agree with although I believe it needs to provide more in order that the consumer can embrace it. Were the vision presented in a more wholistic way by combining simple things that the majority of Scottish people can access, such as the good feelings that come from experiencing fresh air, exercise - like walking, preparing, sharing and eating fresh food with family and friends, then I think it would be stronger.

   The vision is good in terms of how it would materialise. I think it may be short on identifying the common, underlying attitudes of consumers in Scotland that would have to change, i.e. what “good food” means to people and seeking to change their perceptions and consequently their attitudes.

   Put another way, Scotland is a rich nation that has a super abundance of
food and drink, but perversely the grocery market remains very price sensitive, denoting that consumers are not really appreciative. The demand for retail value-added products, stimulated by supermarket advertising, continues to fuel widespread belief that ready-made food products are “good food”. Such food is therefore often replicated and seen in restaurants and other eating places, where consumers can recognise what is on offer.

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

Better choice of small, local outlets/retailers who can handle smaller amounts of local sourced produce than can supermarkets. or supermarkets adopting a more local buying process. This will stimulate variety in the offering and mean I can buy a wider range of foods and ones that are locally grown e.g. mangetouts - that are not from Kenya,

Restaurants and caterers will take a pride in what they produce as being unique and share their enthusiasm with customers including me. Regional specialities will appear on menus more often.

Variety and local provenance of foods will prevail over uniformity of appearance (counter to EU regulation)

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?

There are perhaps some contradictions in the message – the imagery used so far, tells a story which is somewhat at odds with the ‘food-contact experience’ of the majority of people in Scotland.

For example on the cover of the Discussion Document, the images are of primary product in the main and one photo of a dish prepared by a restaurant. Rather than helping to bridge the gap such images/story only serve to confirm the disconnection with food that people in Scotland are subject to. With increasing numbers of consumers in the UK buying groceries online, this situation is likely to get worse.

I believe it is pivotal for this vision of Becoming a Good Food Nation, that people connect more thoroughly with food. If the consumer can be given a vision of what it means to be “connected to food” and how enjoyable that can be, then it might just take off! ‘A picture paints a thousand words’, the saying goes.

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?
• Amalgamating the various agencies such as Food Standards, research organisations
• rationalising the consumer labelling that the majority of people cannot identify (researched),
• establishing a core policy for Scotland in terms of capacity for food production to dovetail with local and regional building plans so that agricultural land is preserved and not lost (UK imports 40% of its food requirements) and we increase the proportion produced here
• promoting best practise in shopping and eating habits in Scotland
• commenting publicly on anything which runs counter to the Good Food Nation vision
• work with other Government Departments to secure and prioritise resources for food production e.g. land, skills, research, waste management.
• With increasing global pressure on food resources, seek to encourage a higher percentage of ‘home’ grown food and exports and reduce food imports

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

(from answers to Q 2)

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

Delivering this vision by firstly influencing the public sector whilst achievable, will I believe do little overall to the appalling statistics on obesity, food waste and landfill, to say nothing of the negative social attitudes that arise from people being “disconnected from their food”. The proposal would
do well to show stronger intent by including some targets for and how Scottish Government will seek to influence the private sector, most noticeably, the four biggest supermarkets which together account for around 75% of the UK grocery market.

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?

Food in the public sector is something that Scottish Government can influence directly and therefore appropriate.

A children’s food policy seems aimed at a rather a soft target. Efforts to change attitudes to food in schools have been widely reported as meeting with mixed results according the media. Still a very long way to go as a consequence of selecting this approach.

Local food has caught consumer attention and there has been a clear response from suppliers, including supermarkets, in promoting food provenance.

Good food choices – strongly agree with the proposal to direct the new Scottish Food Commission to investigate how to change attitudes. Wonder that Healthy Choices is not a strong feature for a nation that currently loves chips, crisps, pies, cakes, chocolate and cream!?

The overall vision should perhaps be more wholistic and combine simple things that the majority of Scottish people can access, such as the good feelings that come from experiencing fresh air, exercise like walking, preparing, sharing and eating fresh food with family and friends!

Having worked with Scotland Food and Drink and employed at the Royal Highland Show, I am fully supportive of continued economic growth in the food and drink industry.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

The Discussion Document list the key areas.

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

Students at Universities and colleges – if you can persuade many of them to become a bit smarter about food, then children and adults are likely to
follow their example. The Good Food Nation is, I think, a good vision that young people would embrace, given the right kind of campaign delivery that will help the vision to become important to them.

12. What else should be considered?

Specific support, through promotion of the vision, for community and other group events that bring together good local food, social activity, minimum waste and basic physical activity.

Liaise with Simon Cousins, producer of BBC Landward, to have a slot in a forthcoming series that will focus on this Good Food Nation – it will be an excellent fit for the programme as it supports local producers but is primarily of consumer interest with a fresh approach.

Develop (through Social Media), Good Food Scotland Ambassadors to stimulate the cultural aspects of the vision for Good Food and particularly to further communicate passionately about the wholesome nature of a good food experience.

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?

Continue to enthuse others about good food, the benefits of better quality and fresh food, the enjoyment of cooking and contact with food in the preparation, engaging with activities that give insights into food production from cheeses to mushrooms and smoked salmon to venison.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Email circular to stakeholders, from Dept of Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities.

Responding to this Consultation Paper

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by 17th October 2014. Please send your response with the completed Respondent Information Form (see "Handling your Response" below) to:

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Or by post to:
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