CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?
   
   Extremely important. Food is vital building block not only in individual healthy lives but also in connected and sustainable communities. For the wider economy, Scotland cannot successfully outwardly promote a successful food industry if its own home diet undermines the nation’s health.

2. How would we know when we had got there? What would success look like?
   
   When a delight in good food is a privilege enjoyed and available to all.

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?
   
   I very much agree with the vision. It builds on a tremendous platform of activity, commitment and every day engagement across all sectors of Scotland. The issue is one of maintaining momentum and focus. ‘Food’ is a big arena with very many interest groups and perspectives of what ‘Good food’ means. Policy makers have to beware of this, allowing neither public health nutritionists, environmentalists, food procurers, industrialists, etc etc have sway but rather keep to a path of pragmatic improvement for the better and widest good.

4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?
   
   A good food nation would be a fairer, happier and healthier society to live in.

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?
   
   The diet of the poorest is declining again. Fruit and vegetable consumption in the poorest is declining. Diets of low socio economic groups especially of pregnant women in these groups is vital for the future health of the country. I would review international social programmes that are combating poor nutrition.

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?
Look beyond what we have always done. Harness new thinking.

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

We have quite extensive monitoring and review systems in place currently.

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

Comments

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?

I think these are right. I would make it a women and children’s policy and I would direct this activity towards poverty alleviation and maternal and infant health. I still think that Scotland has much to learn from California’s WIC programme and the Canadian approach. Supply chains that enhance local food should be encouraged but I do not share some utopian idea that we are all going to grow our own food or buy it from little market stalls. Affordable good food must come from efficient, sustainable production and retail systems. There is still a huge amount to do in overseeing the impact of wider policy areas and joining up to have a positive impact on food. Silo-ing food into one policy area be it environment, or welfare or health does not work. Fantastic to have a Minister of Food at last.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

I would have liked to see a more direct and overt programme to address food poverty in Scotland. Although attention has been given to addressing the temporary crisis brought on by reforms of welfare system and subsequent flourish of food bank establishment – food poverty has always been with us and lies hidden at the margins of society. It comes with exclusion and isolation at any age but particularly in the elderly. Supported social eating for the elderly combats failing nutrition and isolation. (A poorly thought through unintended consequence of FSA action shut down many informal community lunch clubs and gatherings in village halls and community centres.)

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?
In a great example of working across policy areas, the Scottish Government made funding available over the next 2 years to strengthen the operation of food charity FareShare in Scotland. FareShare takes surplus food - good food that would otherwise go to waste - from the food industry, including manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers and redistributes it to a network of charities that share a common goal of helping to fight poverty, disadvantage and exclusion. By ensuring good food is not wasted, we turn an environmental problem into a solution, helping to feed thousands of vulnerable people every day.

There is an opportunity for Scotland to build a FareShare system embedded into its industry and public sector food systems that prioritises feeding people over creating energy from waste food. This ‘surplus ‘ food not only saves the charities money but helps to rebuild lives.

12. What else should be considered?

Comments

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?

In a new role I head up FareShare in Scotland. We currently redistribute around 500 tonnes of food – that is nearly 1,000,000 meals per year. By 2016 we hope to have built that to 2000 tonnes of food and made FareShare the default solution for edible food waste in Scotland as part of creating a fairer and more sustainable nation.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

online

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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