CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

I think that it is extremely important. Our attitude to food and our actions relating to it have a huge impact – on our health and wellbeing as individuals and as a society: on local environments (land use, soil health, biodiversity, use of pesticides use etc); on Scotland’s energy use and carbon emissions (food transport and storage, food packaging, customer transport to shops, and disposal of food waste as well as farming and growing); and on our built environment (both buildings and roads).

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

I think Nourish Scotland hit the nail on the head with their aims and with the results of their ‘Feeding the Five Million’ conference:

- Everyone can afford to feed themselves and their family well
- We eat more of what we produce and produce more of what we eat
- You can find healthy, local, seasonal, organic food all across the country
- There is a diversity of thriving small food businesses
- There is a stronger food culture which is bringing people closer together

I’d perhaps add that which is implied by the above – that our food system would be far more resilient and environmentally sustainable.

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

There are some parts of the vision that I agree with. I like the ‘Good Food Nation’ title and I’m encouraged that the policy brings together the different issues relating to food (health, environment and so on). I agree that it is important:

- That people from every walk of life are included
- To ensure that good food (with sound health & environmental credentials) is readily available
- That all are committed to serving (and eating!) such food
- That children’s wellbeing improves
- That local increasingly equals fresh, healthy and environmentally sound
- That dietary-related diseases will have begun to decline
- The environmental impact of our food consumption will have begun to decline

I’m concerned with the emphasis on exports and attracting visitors to Scotland. In a nation where we have food banks, food poverty and huge health inequalities at least partly linked to food,
think there are much higher priorities, and I’d like this to be reflected in the vision. The
production of food for exports has very little to do with the availability of good food for people
here in Scotland – and in some ways it detracts from seeing and valuing food as food. Food
exports are just another commodity. I’d prefer this policy to focus on the health and wellbeing of
those that live in Scotland.

I’d like the vision to focus on creating and supporting small food businesses (farmers, growers,
artisan producers, retailers, cafes, restaurants and so on) within local economies. Please dispense
with the term the ‘food industry’. I am concerned because it has been as food has become an
industry - with huge scale farming, processing and retailing – and supply chains have grown ever
longer, that food has stopped being ‘good’. Reducing the power and dominance of the food
industry (including supermarkets) will need to be part of creating a Good Food Nation.

I’d like to see more information – in the vision or elsewhere – about what ‘environmentally
sound’ means. I’d like clearer commitments to organic and low carbon food production.

Taking pride and pleasure in good food is valuable, but people could equally take pleasure in less
good food (deep fried Mars bars, for instance), so this needs to be clarified.

Knowing what constitutes good food is not enough. Information does not necessarily lead to
better choices particularly in a poor food culture. People also need to be empowered to make
good food choices and be able to do so because good food is visible, available and affordable –
and less-healthy options are less visible and less available, and their price reflects their true cost.

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

I’d like:

- No need for the local food bank because everyone can afford to eat healthily and well
- Being able to buy more local, organic produce (particularly flour, hard fruit and dairy) and
  not having to choose between ‘local’ and ‘organic’
- A high street with food shops selling local, organic produce - and for such shops to
  become the usual place for everyone to do at least some of their shopping
- More cafes and restaurants serving freshly-prepared local organic good food
- Local, organic produce used more widely and becoming the norm at community events
  (soup lunches, coffee mornings etc)
- Making and sharing good local sustainable food to be at the centre of more community
  gatherings
- More small food businesses including social enterprises and other community projects
- More people growing at least some of their own at home or in the increasing number of
  community gardens and allotments
- More community and farmers’ markets where local sustainable food can be bought and
  sold
- Less use of generic statements (‘We use local produce whenever possible’) and more
  specific information about provenance of food in shops and restaurants (‘All our cheese is
  from Connage Dairy, Ardersier’), so that I know what I’m buying and eating.
- Fewer pesticides used on local fields so that I can walk and cycle in the area without fear
of contamination
 A GM-free Scotland – where we don’t grow GM crops or import GM food
 Fewer large supermarkets and multi-national food outlets so that the area is no longer dominated by them

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?
 Create a health and wellbeing index, and use this (rather than GDP) for measuring Scotland’s success and prosperity
 Land and planning reform to enable more individuals and community groups to access land for food production
 Put measures in place to reduce the power of supermarkets and the food industry
 Plan how to ensure that farmers and growers are rewarded for sustainable practices, and how costs that are currently externalised (such as pesticide use and soil erosion) can be factored in
 Lobby to ensure that EU food and farming policies (including subsidies) support sustainable farming
 Re-balance prices and attitudes towards fresh, local, sustainable and seasonal food perhaps by taxing unhealthy and processed food and limiting advertising of it
 Ensure food labelling gives more specific information about the locality and sustainability of food
 Plan how best to value and support (full and part-time) home-making so that more people have time to cook fresh food regularly

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?
Keeping the emphasis of Good Food Nation on people and the environment
Having an overview of food-related policies across government and ensuring they all work towards the same goal
Ensuring that public money always supports healthy, local and sustainable food options
By listening to the voices of those already working to promote and provide healthy, sustainable food, and involving them in creating a Good Food Nation
Ensuring best practice is shared, and is supported by long-term funding
Keeping the voice and influence of big business in check
Being transparent and accountable

7. In what areas should indicators be set to check we are on track towards our goals?
Health and wellbeing
Biodiversity
Soil conservation
Percentage of Scottish primary food products consumed in Scotland
Energy use/carbon footprint
Water quality
8. What are your views on the different approaches that could be taken to help us become a Good Food Nation?

I agree that a multi-disciplined approach is necessary – working on many different areas at the same time. I’m encouraged that you believe that celebrating food is important and that healthy, sustainable, delicious food should be accessible for everyone. I agree.

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?

In general, I agree with the first four bullet points.

I think the fifth (‘continued economic growth’) should not be a priority. A focus on economic growth seems likely to result in other priorities being sidelined. It is also a notional concept that does not link to the genuine needs of food, water, shelter and so on. Economic growth does not measure or value many of the things that are important to people – good communities, family life, and so on. In regards to food, chasing economic growth seems to lead to the promotion and easy availability of cheap unhealthy food products, and to unsustainable farming practices where environmental, social and health costs are ignored.

By focussing on the other goals, it is likely that many new small and medium size businesses will be created and existing ones will thrive, ensuring many new jobs. Alternatively, the focus for this bullet point could be more specific: strengthening the local food economy and shortening supply chains.

I’d make the priorities:

- **Reducing food poverty** – which would also involve improving food for many of Scotland’s children

- **Food in the public sector**. This is really important. As part of being the ‘Good Food Nation’ ideal, the public sector should also strive to be a ‘good food environment’ where fatty or sugary highly-processed food and drink is excluded.

- **Local food** – I agree with all that is written here regarding encouraging the promotion and sale of locally grown, sustainable food. This should also include strengthening the local food economy and shortening supply chains.

- **Making good food the easy choice** – creating a good food environment where making good food choices is easier, and empowering and enabling people to make those choices.
- **Sustainability** – making all food businesses (including farming) more environmentally sustainable, and creating and supporting more community projects, social enterprises and businesses where sustainability is key to what they do.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

See above

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

Intervening to improve work-life balance, particularly for those with young children. Food – growing, cooking, eating and enjoying it - takes time, which, in our long hours culture, many people do not seem to have. I’d like to see acknowledgement of the contribution made by those who spend less time in paid work in order to ensure they are a ‘good food household’, and policies to enable more people to make this choice. This could include putting a maximum on the number of hours worked per household or introducing financial support for stay-at-home parents, perhaps.

Ensuring food and farming education – in Scotland’s agricultural college and in universities and colleges - focuses on Good Food Nation goals.

Creating and celebrating ‘a good Scots diet’ along the lines of the Fife Diet.

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?

Continue to grow my own organic veg
Work towards getting allotments locally
Try to find new sources of local organic food
Volunteer to help with cooking workshops

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Via Nourish Scotland

**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: