Good Food Nation – Discussion Document

Response from The Food Train Ltd – 28th August 2014

Q1. It’s vitally important to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Scotland that we even start being a Better Food Nation before we manage to be a Good Food Nation.

Q2. When no-one in Scotland is starving, going hungry, malnourished or unable to eat well. Success will mean Scotland has no problems with food access, food poverty or malnutrition and is a zero hunger country.

Q3. Yes we agree with the vision but it is weak. The vision should seek improvement in the entire nation’s wellbeing, not just children. The vision should demand that Scotland becomes a zero hunger country by saying “we will work to eradicate food poverty, poor food access and malnutrition”. There is no purpose in aspiring to creating pride and pleasure in food served day by day in Scotland when many people are living on less than adequate food intake, diets, restricted food access and suffering malnutrition.

Q4. At Food Train a Good Food Nation for us means that no older person in Scotland will go hungry simply because they have poor food access. Scotland’s current legislative policy that excludes food access from Free Personal & Nursing Care essentially allows us to let older people starve, which as a nation we should be ashamed of.

Q5. The focus now needs to expand beyond retail, exports and food safety. We must accept and acknowledge there are many people going hungry in our country and the first steps should be taken to tackle that before we get close to the aspirational words of this document. Food is the ‘thing’ that connects all policy and all parts of life, but receives nowhere near the funding, prominence, focus or work that it needs. That needs to be fixed first and Food must be the theme that links all our policies/practices relating to people.

Q6. Unless the Food Commission has power to change policy, hold public sector to account, funding to distribute and is tasked with creating a zero hunger country then it will be nothing more than a ‘talking shop’ that advises others but has no power to do anything. Any new body set up must have powers and draw from all sectors of Scottish Society.

Q7. The early goals should be 1) eradicate food poverty/hunger 2) eradicate malnutrition 3) ensure everyone has access to food.

Q8. As at Q5. above we must widen the approach and the most important first step is to acknowledge the scale of hunger/poor access/malnutrition in the country then build actions to tackle the problems we have.

Q9 and 10. These areas are all of course important but as above we believe the focus must shift to the wider issues of food poverty/food access/malnutrition. We also believe there should be a focus on older people. Malnutrition affects 10% of our older population (around 90,000) and the cost to health/social care runs into billions. Every piece of evidence shows malnutrition is preventable and easily so. This document does nothing to acknowledge this problem and associated costs and should.

Q11 Answer same as Q5 and Q8
Q12. A full review of how ‘food’ is addressed through Free Personal & Nursing Care at Home Legislation to firstly create an understanding of how malnutrition is so widespread among older people then secondly use that information to shape health and social care provision that meets the food needs of older people.

Q13. At Food Train we will

- Continue to advocate the food needs of older people
- Continue to drive the need for more research into preventing malnutrition among older people
- Continue to drive our own national expansion aims of providing universal food access to any older person in Scotland at their time and point of need
- Continue to lobby Government on tackling food poverty/food access/malnutrition
- Continue to progress the Scottish Older People’s Food Task Force into having a strong role/remit/place within the health & social care arena