CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

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

   Comments

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

   Comments

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

   Comments

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?

   Comments

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

   Comments

**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:

goodfoodnation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:
Good Food Nation
Food and Drink Division
B1 Spur
Saughton House
Edinburgh
Dear Richard

The Crown Estate’s Response to Scottish Government’s “Becoming a Good Food Nation” discussion paper

Introduction
The Crown Estate manages a diverse portfolio of assets guided by three key values of commerciality, integrity and stewardship. 100% of the annual profit is paid to the UK Government. In Scotland, assets include around 50% of the foreshore and beds of tidal rivers, together with almost the entire seabed out to the 12 nautical mile limit. We are an independent commercial business and we work collaboratively with government and the national and local level.

The Crown Estate manages around 850 sites for aquaculture in Scotland and works to support the industry’s ambitions for sustainable growth. The Crown Estate grants leases for aquaculture sites only when all the necessary consents having been obtained. Planning controls for fish farms transferred from The Crown Estate to local authorities under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 (and the subsequent Town and Country Planning Marine Fish Farming Scotland Order 2007). We supported this move as it established a clear distinction between landlord and regulator, a distinction that many in the industry support.

We have invested 1.9 million in research and development across a range of topics including the potential of marine biomass (£500,000 since 2006/7) and our annual research and development commitment is now £250,000.

To enhance transparency, The Crown Estate worked with SEPA, the FSA and Marine Scotland to establish the Scottish National Aquaculture Database (http://aquaculture.scotland.gov.uk/). The database provides a comprehensive and up to date overview of the industry and its activities, including regulated environmental performance.

With an annual turnover of £1.4 billion, aquaculture supports 8,000 jobs in Scotland. The Scottish Government’s report on ‘the benefits to Scotland of aquaculture’ estimated that the minimum value of Scottish aquaculture exports is £470 million. Our Scotland-wide approach means we can structure leasing carefully to avoid ‘sterilisation’ of parts of the seabed for lengthy periods and help developers to identify the most productive sites. Our three-strong team cover the whole of Scotland, ensuring efficient management of assets.

Becoming a Good Food Nation
We strongly support the vision set out in the “Becoming a Good Food Nation” with particular support for the statements “local increasingly equals fresh, healthy and environmentally sound” and
decreasing “the environmental impact locally and world-wide, of our food consumption”. In our view, aquaculture has an important role to play in this ambition alongside a productive and sustainably managed capture fisheries sector. We agree with the findings from the Scottish Government’s report on ‘the benefits to Scotland of aquaculture’ which states that “Quality and high value is Scottish aquaculture’s trump card”. Increased strength, security and productivity in these sectors and markets can bring great benefits to local communities that supply Scotland’s seafood industry as well as maintaining the production of good quality and good value produce.

The Crown Estate believes that local food networks and initiatives are very important elements to ensure the delivery of the vision set out in “Becoming a Good Food Nation”. In addition to the proposals in section 4.3, we believe that linking industries such as marine leisure and tourism into local food networks will provide joint benefits for wider industry and will provide strong and stable local communities. Such an approach would have the added benefit of allowing the growth of businesses close to source as well as adding value to produce through greater knowledge and appreciation of food sources.

These benefits have been highlighted in The Crown Estates Scotland report (http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/300060/scotland-report-2014.pdf) with a case study on the island of Gigha noting that aquaculture can create a ‘living landscape’ providing parallel growth of aquaculture and tourism. Aquaculture products are also sold by retailers and restaurants on the island, which has the dual benefit of generating further income for the businesses locally and ensuring tourists are able to sample local produce, adding to the visitor experience.

We strongly agree that, as stated in section 4.5, improving Scotland’s relationship with food and drink will provide a “virtuous economic cycle”. In addition to the proposed actions, better operational integration between aquaculture and capture fisheries interests can bring many shared benefits to each sector and will help build resilience into the seafood sector. These benefits will be felt most strongly at a local level where optimal use of resource and shared infrastructure and skills can contribute to growth and the long term sustainability of both the industries.

The issue of tackling food choices in Scotland is difficult to solve but the “Becoming a Good Food Nation” paper highlights a number of very promising ways of achieving this whilst providing a framework for delivering a strong Scottish food and drink industry in line with national priorities. The Crown Estate believes that alongside these aims, greater focus on stewardship in the food production industry together with promotion of sustainable working practices are key elements in ensuring an enduring market for Scotland’s produce as well as continued yields.

In conclusion, The Crown Estate fully endorses the proposed principles and actions set out in “Becoming a Good Food Nation” and we are keen to play our part in achieving the vision through continued sustainable management of the seabed.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Laidlaw
Portfolio Manager, Rural & Coastal