CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

It is essential. Otherwise more generations will lose the connection between how food is grown and produced and cooked. Scotland and the rest of the UK is going to way of the USA, with its obesity crisis, and disconnection between food and society. We have a much less healthy diet than our European neighbours, and although some steps have been taken to improve this, a lot more needs to be done.

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

The majority of people with gardens would be reconnected with the art and science of growing part of what they eat. People would seek out local and fresh produce. People would plan their weekly menus, and tie in one day’s eating with the next. Meat consumption will be down and vegetable and grain consumption will be up.

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

In general the proposed vision is being aspirational and forward-thinking, which is good. It is very general, but I guess ‘vision’ documents need to be.

I am concerned that the emphasis on increasing food exports from Scotland is given such a high priority (being in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} paragraph). I understand that economic growth is important, but we have such a problem with food poverty within Scotland, I believe sorting this should take priority over increasing exports. Let’s make Scottish food good, and make it available to Scottish people. The economy will also improve if we encourage Scottish people to spend their money within Scotland, not just by selling abroad.

There is also no reference in the current vision to eating with the seasons and reducing food miles. If we want to teach people more about where their food comes from, reduce our carbon footprint, and deplete our reliance on imported food, then understanding of seasonality needs to be prioritised.

There is also currently no reference to a reduction in meat consumption in the proposed vision. I understand that this will be a very contentious issue in Scotland, but if we truly want to improve the environment, slow climate change and improve diets, we need to move from a meat-centric diet to a vegetable and grain-centric one.
4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

Coupar Angus is an economically mixed community, with the majority of the demographic being on low (or no) income. We have no greengrocer, but do have a butcher, bakery and chicken factory. We have 1 large and 2 small supermarkets. A lot of residents drive to the Tesco in Blairgowrie (or even to Perth and Dundee) to do their weekly food shop. The town is surrounded by large farms that grow broccoli, carrots, potatoes and soft fruit, but it is very hard to buy local produce. We would like this to be changed, so local farmers have to sell locally, not just to the huge supermarkets.

The charity, Forward Coupar Angus, has set one of its priorities as improving food understanding in the town. We are setting up a community garden, hold monthly markets and are running cooking schools and courses. However, these currently only reach the middle-class, who are already knowledgeable about good food (although who do still make bad food choices). Becoming a Good Food Nation would mean that all residents of Coupar Angus would understand the importance of eating good food, and that everyone would feel empowered and able to make good food choices.

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

This new policy needs to link in with the National Farmers Union and other farming groups e.g. East of Scotland Farmers, Crofting Federation. We must have buy in from them as well if we are going to succeed.

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

It will be important to have a Steering Group, which I believe the Food Commission could be. It could be made up of people from the food, health, education and social sectors. However, I believe it is important to get a broad spectrum of people and experiences within the commission – we should be careful to not fill the commission with food industry ‘experts’ as their priorities could be different to small-scale producers and local sellers.

We will need some sort of group (possibly the Food Commission) to keep the Good Food Nation aims of track. They could set targets for regions and hold organisations / businesses to account.

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

Indicators would be:
- Amount of veg that farmers make available to local shops increases.
- A reduction in red meat sales and production.
- More abattoirs being opened – so producers can sell meat locally, and
animals don’t have to be transported hundreds of miles. 
- Increase in sales of vegetable seeds.
- Back gardens being turned into veg plots.
- Each town and village to have a playgroup fruit and vegetable activity programme.
- Healthy family meal programmes on Scottish TV.
- All equating to a drop in obesity levels and carbon footprints.

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

Reducing air miles, buying and eating local produce and becoming more food sustainable must be the paramount aims. Increasing exports should be a secondary aim. Improving diets and decreasing food-related diseases will come as a bi-product of improving food choices.

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:
Of course, the public sector should set the precedence, with hospitals and schools leading the way with good food. However, the vision document says “Ensuring food in public settings provides affordable access to good nutrition and exemplifies the Good Food Nation ideal”. More often than not, the ‘food in public settings’ is actually provided by the private sector. Although the public sector can set the example, we must try to place more restrictions on the private sector to only provide good food as well – cinemas, coffee shops, supermarkets etc.

A children’s food policy:
The Children’s Food Policy looks good. It is very important to teach children about food – both where it comes from and how to cook it. Big steps have been made in this direction already, but we do still need to do more. We need to start the education at weaning, and toddler age. But however educated children may be about good food, they are still not the ones who do the weekly food shop. We cannot purely focus on teaching children, but must also empower parents, teachers and all adults to make good food choices.

Local food:
This needs to be very clearly controlled. E.g. Tesco currently claim to be all about ‘local food’, but as you scrape back that label, their claims fall apart. They still fly in apples from NZ at the height of the British apple season. This is crazy and needs to stop! Farmers also need to be incentivise or made to sell locally.

Good food choices:
Make it easier to make good choices. Legisllate against bad food full of sugar and fats. At the moment, the consumer has to be personally strong to resist the temptations of bad food. The government needs to step in to make it easier to get healthier food. Shops should be made to reduce sweet / biscuits and convenience food sections. Increase fresh and dried produce sections.

Continued economic growth:
This should be replaced with either ‘sustainable economic growth’ or ‘local economic growth’. National and international economic growth is precarious and unsustainable. Scotland has the opportunity to instead prioritise its people, its health and its food. Scotland should demonstrate that it cares more about its people and the planet, than it does about precarious economic systems.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?
Agriculture – we must carry out this new Food Policy hand-in-hand with the new Common Agricultural Policy. We must all be working together to improve Scotland’s food. Get farmers on board! Is the aim to have more small-scale producers only, or to encourage large-scale producers to change too? Also, Scotland needs to move away from sheep farming and into more sustainable forms of farming – e.g. cereals, cattle and vegetables. This will also tackle the continued deforestation of Scotland, so will improve the environment and biodiversity.

Land ownership – Potential small-scale producers currently find it hard to get land to grow / rear animals. Even with aspirational aims, the Scottish Government will need to assist people to become producers of good food. Scottish Crofting Federation are taking steps toward this, but more needs to be done in other areas too.

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?
Rural / Food Growing apprenticeships. We need more people learning how to grow on a small to medium scale. Crofting is good for this further north, but we need more small growers further south too.

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?
Forward Coupar Angus has started a Community Garden for people to grow veg in. We are running cooking courses, and have a weekly local vegetable stall. We also have a cooking school for children every school holiday, and a cooking club is starting up at the local primary school. We have attempted to make connections with local farmers to get them to sell locally. Some have taken this on board, but NOT the larger farmers. This needs more work, but it would be good to get some
14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Antonia Ineson from Nourish encouraged me to go to the Nourish meeting in Inverness. I went along to the event, and found it very interesting to share ideas with other people from the food sector.

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
EH11 3XD

If you have any queries please contact Eugenia Christie at 0131 244 9574.

This consultation, and all other Scottish Government consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the Scottish Government website at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations .

The Scottish Government has an email alert system for consultations, http://register.scotland.gov.uk. This system allows stakeholder individuals and organisations to register and receive a weekly email containing details of all new consultations (including web links). It complements, but in no way replaces Scottish Government distribution lists, and is designed to allow stakeholders to keep up to date with all Scottish Government consultation activity, and therefore be alerted at the earliest opportunity to those of most interest. We would encourage you to register.

Handling your response

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the Respondent Information Form which forms part of the consultation questionnaire attached an annex as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.