"The good food link in the good food chain"

Becoming a Good Food Nation comments from Scottish Food Guide, Oct 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. It is very positive and has a lot to commend it. As ever, the devil is in the detail. When one tries to enable action there will be parties straining in opposing directions. It can read as a ‘top down’ approach at times but needs to be ‘grass roots’ upwards to access long lasting success. We are fortunate in Scotland to have such open access to our politicians, be it through the multitude of Cross Party groups, live broadcasts or discussion documents on policy.

With a name like Scottish Food Guide it is hardly surprising that I am taking a great interest in Becoming a Good Food Nation but as we all have to eat, all Scots should take note. As in so many facets of daily life, good food is never that simple. Do we mean ‘good, clean and fair’ as in Slow Food Mantra? Well probably, as who wouldn’t wish high quality food, good for our environment and a fair price for farmers as well as consumers? Precious artisan cheeses and fragrant rapeseed oils have in the past been unfairly clobbered by the ‘fat fear’ yet are a valuable part of our diet, both in terms of nutrients and enjoyment. Our unbeatable malt whiskies are world-renowned and a great export, but also alcoholic, naturally. Yet as part of a balanced diet all local, high quality sustainably produced food and drink is good: good for us and good for the health of our economy.

On the negative, we have takeaway vans selling fried foods outside schoolyards, a lack of cooking skills and rising obesity rates across Scotland. In short, we have the resources to modify a generation’s eating habits but we need to feel good about the food we eat, appreciate where it comes from and value our resources. We also need to remember we seek value for money food not cheap food. Granted food must be affordable, but not to the detriment of producers. Many of our European counterparts spend a higher proportion of their income on food as they value the pleasure it gives and respect their farmers.

The document is certainly visionary and I feel Education should be further emphasized as it is fundamental to making it work. From schools through colleges to the workplace and using every form of communication, health and wellbeing all in senses of the term is vital. Confidence in cooking creates a natural interest in local food networks. Focusing on children’s food and public sector policy should help change attitudes.

The appointment of a Scottish Food Commission is a positive concept. What will be its purpose and powers? Who shall define its tasks and appoint its participants? To whom will it be accountable? It should cover the whole food chain from farmers and fishermen to manufacturers
and educationalists to ensure a full skills set and comprehensive hands on knowledge of food. Scotland is a nation of SME’s and nowhere more so than in food and drink enterprises so their support, and indeed supporting them, is very important. At the other end of ‘business’ are such big issues as TTIP agreements that can create massive disruption and long term hardship to our Nation.

Scotland has come a long way. It is far and away ahead of the rest of the UK in terms of school meal provision; it has wonderful natural resources: seafood, beef and lamb, clear waters, berries etc, and much fertile land for food security. But we can never be complacent. Nor is one document the answer - becoming a Good Food Nation will be an everlasting journey.

Best wishes,

Wendy Barrie
MHCIMA  MREHIS  DipHEc  MinstD
CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

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

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?
   
   See my comments on document

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

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

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

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

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

   Yes - See my document

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

   See my document

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

   See my document

12. What else should be considered?

   See my document

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?

   See my document

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

   By e-mail and Cross Party Food Group

**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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