CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

- It is vital that Scotland aims to be a Good Food Nation and the Soil Association’s Food for Life Scotland programme welcomes, and supports, the Scottish Government’s ambition in this regard.

- Food can be used as a catalyst to tackle a number of the greatest health, social, environmental and economic challenges facing us today. From obesity and diet-related ill-health to food poverty and waste, climate change and biodiversity loss to declining prosperity and social dislocation, food is not only at the heart of some of our greatest problems, but also a vital part of the solution.

- ‘Good food for all’ is a core theme of the Soil Association’s strategy which highlights: “Good food can transform people’s lives. It’s not just about the health benefits of a good diet. It’s about cultural cohesion, improving life chances and tackling some of the greatest health and social inequalities in our society.” At the Soil Association we believe “Good food is a right, not a privilege”.

- Food for Life Scotland – a flagship programme of Soil Association Scotland supported by The Scottish Government – is working in partnership across Scotland to transform food culture and food systems. We recognise there needs to be transformative change and this will require a shift across all aspects of society. We’d welcome a strategic and overarching ambition which unites policy and action on public health, wellbeing, food and farming, procurement, environment and economy in pursuit of a shared aim.

- In addition to this response, Food for Life Scotland has contributed to two other responses
  - The Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership (EFFLP) response, which focuses on public food and drink policy. EELP is a major collaboration between the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh, working with Soil Association Scotland to explore how we can best support sustainable and healthy food systems within public procurement and catering services across Scotland’s capital.
  - The Fife School Food Project response. The project is a collaboration between Fife Council (catering team), the Fife Diet and Soil Association Scotland (specifically the Food for Life Scotland team). Work on this innovative project – and a recent mid-term evaluation – has provided a good evidence base, which has informed a separate joint response from Soil Association Scotland and the Fife Diet.

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

- We believe success will come when people of all ages and from all walks of life know, understand and care about the connections between food, health, economy and the environment; can access affordable good food; and can choose (and/or are encouraged and enabled) to eat and cook good food.
• Good food means fresh, minimally processed food which is affordable, healthy, seasonal and produced using environmentally sustainable and ethical systems e.g. fish which is Marine Stewardship Council certified, food and drink which is GM Free, certified organic, or produced as a result of lower input farming. Such food, especially if produced in Scotland or nearby, will support the nation’s economy, health and wellbeing, a thriving food industry (with high levels of employment in the sector) and environmental sustainability. It is food that is good for people, places and the planet and will bring significant community benefits.

• We believe transformative change across society will be achieved most easily if the government and public sector leads by example, serving increasing levels of sustainable, locally sourced, freshly prepared, healthy food to patients, people in care, service users, students, employees and customers. In turn, this will: stimulate demand and the creation of more resilient supply chains; increase accessibility and affordability of good food; help people to make healthy, sustainable choices outside of the home; encourage and enable good food choices at home and normalising positive eating behaviours.

• We think success will mean:

  o There will be better access to affordable, healthy, sustainable and local food - and meals certified by the Food for Life Catering Mark - within the public (and private) sector which will benefit the people of Scotland of all ages (from nurseries and schools to care settings and workplaces) with improved health and wellbeing across society, declining levels of obesity and weight-related health issues.

  o Communities will become more resilient and local economies will be strengthened by having greater local food provision from nearby farms, suppliers and retailers. Not only will this result in a greater proportion of jobs available within the food and drink sector, but would give us more opportunity to ‘get to know’ and have positive interactions with the producers of our food. Our communities will also look very different, with growing spaces and urban farms bringing food growing closer to home.

  o A positive food culture where mealtimes are an important part of the day where everyone comes together to share and enjoy good food and where conversations about the provenance and seasonality of ingredients are everyday topics.

  o The teaching of food related skills – from growing and cooking to butchery and baking - and food education will become the norm in schools, workplaces and in our communities across Scotland with careers in the farming and the food sector perceived as a worthwhile and attractive option for our young people. Inviting local farmers, food producers, suppliers as well as cooks into the classroom to deliver food related activities will be a common practice for teachers across the country.

  o A thriving retail sector with a diversity of food choices on offer and consistent messaging across all platforms so that the production, retail, serving and consumption of fresh, healthy and sustainable food is the norm.
3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

The proposed vision is clear and ambitious and is a useful starting point but we would note the following:

- There must be mention of the important role that farming systems – as the first link in our food system – play in sustainability and biodiversity and, importantly, recognition that sustainable farming and food production is the key starting point on a journey to Becoming a Good Food Nation.

- The vision should lead with a statement about how it will positively impact Scottish people and communities rather than leading with the importance of exports and industry (although we acknowledge this is an important part of the vision).

- There needs to be a stronger emphasis on the grassroots, community led local food movement and a vision for how our towns, cities and communities across Scotland will be transformed by a closer proximity to, and active participation in, urban food production. It’s important to acknowledge the vital role communities, cities/towns and the local food movement need to play in tandem with ‘industry’.

- The tone of the vision feels slightly ‘top down’ and it suggests a passive and consumer focused relationship with food, with a strong focus on food being ‘served’ to people. While we acknowledge the role of the food industry and public/private sector catering as being vital in shaping a Good Food Nation, we would prefer that the vision include a more ‘active’ role for communities and individuals - one which encourages and enables positive food choices and active participation in all aspects of the food system.

- A vision for a Good Food Nation needs to incorporate a vision of how affordable access to good food will encourage and enable positive behaviours and benefit communities. It should go beyond an information only model i.e. it is not enough to suggest that everyone ‘knows what constitutes good food and why’ and instead should reflect the importance that people should be supported, encouraged and enabled to make positive food choices. Being a true Good Food Nation will require engaged citizens who feel empowered to participate and indeed are the driving force for positive change.

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

- For Food for Life Scotland, Being a Good Food Nation in a locality means ‘good food for all’ - increased access to, education about and engagement on (affordable) fresh, healthy and sustainable food. In order to truly shift attitudes and positively influence behaviours it’s important to make healthy sustainable food choices the social norm. FFLS believes a key step in this journey is to ensure that there are consistent and joined up policies and strategies across local and national governments and organisations with regards to food provision.

This should be backed up with a ‘whole settings’ approach which involves leadership from the top and engagement of the wider workforce to transform food culture and promote
healthy food behaviours. This involves the consistent provision of nutritious, sustainable food in nurseries, schools, Higher/FE institutions, workplaces, hospitals and care settings as well as leisure centres and tourist attractions and the education and engagement of service users (pupils, employees, patients, residents), their families and the wider community to enable and inspire them to eat well.

- Food for Life Scotland works in partnership across Scotland to transform food culture and food systems. We have seen a significant growth in the number of Food for Life Catering Mark (FFLCM) awards from 3 to 24 in this current funding phase and together these catering services prepare over 16.5 million independently certified fresh, healthy and sustainable meals at bronze, silver and gold levels in Scottish nurseries, schools, universities, workplaces, community lunch clubs, care homes, leisure centres and visitor attractions.

We are striving to ensure that in communities across Scotland fresh, healthy and sustainable meals become normalised and made accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. There is still much work to do not least in raising awareness and understanding of the connections between food, health, economy and the environment and influence and embed positive food behaviours at home.

- 1 in 3 primary schools currently serve meals certified by the Food for Life Catering Mark which means children across Scotland are benefiting from increased access to fresh, healthy and sustainable meals.

- To support our work to improve the food on the plate in schools, FFLS have developed and are implementing an Education and Engagement Framework which promotes a holistic ‘whole settings’ approach to school food and food education focusing on four key action areas: culture, catering, curriculum and community and this is currently being trialled in 24 ‘pathfinder’ pilot schools across Scotland.

- Alongside our work in schools and communities FFLS has a real focus on a strategic place based approach to change through the work we do on the Sustainable Food Cities Model acknowledging that cities and towns are key actors in transforming our food systems and culture. Currently our work is focused on supporting (in partnership) Edinburgh and Glasgow to become Sustainable Food Cities.

- Being a Good Food Nation also means farming in ways which have a positive effect on our communities and biodiversity; increased wildlife, improving and preserving soil structures and water quality and minimising environmental impact.

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

- The journey has already begun and pockets of excellence can be found across Scotland - from community gardens to local, healthy and organic food being served in organisations with the independently certified Food for Life Catering Mark, and from a ‘whole settings’ approach to food culture in the FFLS pathfinder schools to the emerging Sustainable Food Cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.
• We hope that a strong, clear and consistent approach will be taken across all Government departments and that these national policies complement local policies and strategies and existing projects and programmes on the ground.

• Where necessary we think it is important that local government is incentivised to implement these policies consistently so we do not end up with a two tier approach i.e. a strong national policy with an inconsistent implementation at a local level. This is vital to ensure key target audiences are not disempowered and disengaged.

• Serving fresh, healthy and sustainable food needs to be incentivised and in particular the public sector needs to be supported to serve such food by ensuring procurement systems are flexible enough to support innovation. We would like to suggest ring fencing of budgets on food spend and catering staff as well as performance related targets which have to be reported on regularly (The Food for Life Catering Mark could be a useful indicator here).

• Preventative spend (Christie Review) needs to be prioritised both for health of people and health of planet, therefore refocusing ‘best value’ towards locally and sustainably produced food where possible.

• Procurement systems need to ensure that sourcing healthy, sustainable and local food is logical, consistent and easy and we should build on the initial work of Catering for Change\(^1\). For example, the UK Government’s new Plan for Public Procurement\(^2\) in England promotes the use of a Balanced Scorecard\(^3\) (see diagram below) to make the procurement process for healthy and sustainable food clearer and simpler. The guidance for use of the scorecard cites the Food for Life Catering Mark as a tool for caterers who wish to guarantee a good or excellent performance against the award criteria in the balanced scorecard.

The scorecard brings a consistent buying approach across the public sector. The balanced scorecard describes an evaluation approach where straightforward criteria, such as cost, are ‘balanced’ against more complex criteria, such as health and wellbeing, resource efficiency and quality of service.

\[\text{Diagram: Balanced Scorecard for public food procurement}\]

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By using a balanced scorecard, priority themes such as farm assurance, food waste management, and engagement with SMEs can be built into procurement decisions, alongside well-established criteria, such as animal welfare, environment, nutrition, and energy management and this can be achieved in a way that is fully compliant with European Procurement Law and delivers best value per pound spent.

- Training and upskilling is key and in particular craft skills for cooks and awareness raising and training for procurement teams and decision makers to help them understand the links between food, health, economy and the environment and encourage and enable them to innovate.

- Development of regional supply chains needs to be supported to allow micro and small producers to distribute and market their seasonal and fresh produce, within the right time window, and to deal with shortages/gluts in the market.

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

- A Food Commission could help take a high level overview of the food system to ensure that activity across public health, food and drink, environment and across the public, private and third sector is joined up and consistent.

- Membership is key to this group functioning well and FFLS would suggest that it’s vital that a strong strategic focus is supported by those involved in delivering activity on the ground to ensure joined up activity and bolster informed decision making. It’s also vital that the membership does not rely on the ‘usual suspects’ but consists of new and more diverse voices and we would welcome practitioner expertise being called on as well as recognised ‘experts’.

- It’s vital that the Food Commission acts in an open and inclusive manner; inviting contributions and expertise from those delivering on the ground rather than just operating as an expert group ‘behind closed doors’.

- The Food Commission should report publicly on a regular basis against clear targets.

- Food Policy Councils at a city level are in the early stages of development in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, and well refined models exist in different countries, and it is important to consider how a Food Commission might link with these Food Policy Councils.

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

- We would also like to see the role of sustainable, healthy food built properly into the National Performance Framework (NPF) to reflect its importance in delivering the National Outcomes especially for a ‘Healthier Scotland’. Diet and nutrition do not feature under the healthier outcome or in the NPF.
It is vital that the existing Scottish Government policies around all aspects of food and health (often split across different departments/divisions) are articulated and joined-up. We would like to see a strategic and overarching ambition which unites policy and action on public health, wellbeing, food and farming, procurement, environment and economy in pursuit of a shared aim. We hope the Becoming a Good Food Nation indicators share targets with, and link to, all relevant policies and action plans including:

**Health and nutrition**
- Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland: A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight (2010)
- Revised Scottish Dietary Goals (2013)
- Beyond the School Gate – Improving Food Choices in the School Community (2014)
- The Schools (Health Promotion & Nutrition) (Scotland) Act (2007)

**Public sector**
- Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill (2014)
- Catering for Change: Buying Food Sustainably in the Public Sector (2011)
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
- Community Planning Partnership Plans and Single Outcome Agreements

**Environment**
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2013-2020
- Climate Ready Scotland: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (2014)
- 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity – A strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland (2013)
- Getting the best from our land – a land use strategy for Scotland (2011)
- The Scottish Soil Framework (2009)

**People and society**
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (2014)
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

**Education**
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Better Eating Better Learning – A New Context for School Food (2014)
- How good is our school (HGIOS)
- Learning for Sustainability

**Economy**
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2013-2020
- Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland (2011)

In addition we suggest the following indicators/areas for measuring success:
• Public sector procurement targets relating to uptake of the Food for Life Catering Mark and sustainable supply chains e.g. in Denmark the public sector has an organic target
• Environmental impact – water pollution, soil quality, GHG emissions reducing over time, greater levels of biodiversity (key species: pollinators, birds hedgehogs), volume/sales of certified sustainable seafood and reduced waste throughout the supply chain.
• Skills and lifelong learning (including but not limited to cooking, growing, sustainable procurement)
• Employability: number of people working in food production and foodservice and earning at least the living wage.
• Supply chain – number of new, local sustainable and ethical contracts supplying into public sector and/or number of organisations with the Catering Mark Supplier Scheme award
• A measure of food poverty and health inequalities

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

• Use the Food for Life Scotland evidence-based model- and celebratory approach - to transform food culture and promote healthy and sustainable food behaviours in a site, a setting and across a geographical area by promoting the uptake of:
  o the Food for Life Catering Mark\(^4\)
  o the FFLS Education and Engagement Framework\(^5\)
  o the Sustainable Food Cities Model\(^6\)

• Food education from an early age is vital to encourage life-long positive eating habits and sustainable food choices. Food for Life Scotland is taking a partnership led approach to developing and testing an Education and Engagement Framework for schools (the majority of which) serve Food for Life Catering Mark certified meals, with a view to replicating the framework in other sectors for example Higher/Further education institutions and early years settings. The framework for schools helps them to develop, embed and celebrate a holistic approach to food through four key action areas: Culture, Catering, Curriculum, and Community.

• Investment in skills throughout the food system (farming, distribution, retail, foodservice, consumer skills and education provision) to encourage and support an economy and society that is more geared towards wholesome and unprocessed food production and consumption.

• As a key foundation of a Good Food Nation, Scottish Government needs to incentivise and support the production of healthy, sustainable food e.g. public sector procurement targets for Scottish organic food to drive production and consumption as Denmark have done.

• Ring fence budgets for food provision and staffing (cooks) within local authority budgets.

\(^4\) Soil Association: [http://www.sacert.org/catering](http://www.sacert.org/catering)
\(^6\) Sustainable Food Cities: [http://sustainablefoodcities.org/](http://sustainablefoodcities.org/)
Learning for Sustainability is now an entitlement for all learners in Scotland, as well as a key component of the General Teaching Council for Scotland's revised Professional Standards for all Scottish teachers. The alignment of the vision outlined in Becoming a Good Food Nation, with that outlined by Learning for Sustainability, offers huge scope for real, transformational change in Scotland’s relationship with and understanding of food. A great deal of work is already being undertaken by the National Implementation Group for Learning for Sustainability to shape the national strategic vision for LfS and empower Scotland’s learners and educational practitioners to understand and apply this vision in their own practice.

We suggest that in future, all (but in particular those relating to procurement, catering, health, social/community work, and education) Scottish job descriptions include reference to Learning for Sustainability. This approach must, however, be delivered in conjunction with effective support and training across all sectors to ensure a real understanding of the key principles that underpin Learning for Sustainability and how they can be applied across a variety of different sectors and roles.

- Supporting CPD and craft skills for public sector cooks in local ‘skills academies’ which bring together cooks from both the public and private sector. To ensure this is a viable option local authorities (and wider public sector) would need to be supported/incentivised to ‘backfill’ posts to allow cooks to leave kitchens during working hours.

- Choice editing in retail and foodservice for more environmentally sustainable foods such as MSC certified seafood, organic certified food and drink, backed up with engaging great consumer messaging that raises awareness of the benefits of sustainable food production.

- Remove the (financial) pressure on Local Authorities to maintain a level of school meal uptake – this pressure curbs innovation in school meal menu development – and consider implementing a £1 flat fee for school meals across Scotland to promote uptake – currently there is a wide range of prices from £1.20 to £2.10.

- Incentivise true innovation in menu development and give those responsible for menu development – particularly in schools – more confidence (and skills) in putting new and different dishes on the menu. This would help ensure a balance within school food provision between providing food that children want to eat and providing food that we as a society agree our children should be eating and educating them sufficiently for them to accept and enjoy that food when it is on offer.

- Encourage and support public sector caterers to make decisions based on ‘preventative’ spend rather than ‘bottom’ line priorities.

- Procurement policies and processes need to be flexible enough to allow for innovation in the supply chain and innovation across a shared services agenda.

- Investment in developing sustainable local supply chains and ensuring farmers, producers and SMEs are supported to maximise opportunities in the short and long term.

- It is essential that if we are to effect a cultural shift there needs to be clear and consistent messaging and policy across all aspects of national and Scottish government to ensure we do not disempower consumers.
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 for Life Scotland agrees with the first priority, ‘food in the public sector’, but would stress it needs to be linked to food production and intersect with policies and support towards sustainable production and supply chains.

   - We believe that 'A Children's Food Policy' should be widened to become a 'A Food Policy for Children, Families and Communities', acknowledging the importance of improving our children’s diets, but strengthening its potential for change by including the wider contexts in which our children grow up.

   - The third priority, ‘local food’, should recognise that local food is not always the most environmentally sustainable option and therefore reference should be made to ‘local and environmentally sustainable’ as being the ideal.

   - The fourth priority, ‘good food choices’, needs to recognise that many people need to be supported, encouraged and enabled to make good food choices and so we’d suggest amending to ‘Enabling Good Food Choices’.

   - We further believe that “continued economic growth” should be changed to: “Sustainable development - aligning social, environmental and economic growth” in recognition of the fact that some kinds of economic growth are not compatible with sustainability. Care for the environment should form an important part of at least one of the priorities and this is where we believe it fits best.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

   N/A

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

   - In addition to the work already underway in Edinburgh and Glasgow on ‘Sustainable Food Cities’, we recommend building and consolidating the work already started by the Food for Life Scotland team by further developing a number of place based ‘exemplars’ in cities or Local Authorities who are already demonstrating leadership through the Food for Life Catering Mark and Food for Life Scotland’s ‘whole settings’ approach. These exemplars could be supported to become beacons of good practice where a strategic (top down) and grassroots (bottom up) approach works in harmony to drive real and positive change to food culture and food systems across an area.
• Independent evaluation\(^7\) of the Fife Local School Meals pilot – a partnership project between Soil Association Scotland, Fife Council and the Fife Diet – concluded “The pilot project delivered significant improvements to the sustainability of school meals”. It also demonstrated it was viable to ‘reverse engineer’ a school lunch menu by designing a menu based on the availability of local and seasonal produce. This should become the norm within the constraints of current procurement law as it was demonstrated to deliver a number of early benefits including: business security for participating local businesses, additional employment opportunities, high sustainability attributes, increased pride and job satisfaction from the cooks.

12. What else should be considered?

Supporting healthy and sustainable public food procurement

• From the feedback we are receiving, and our learning to date from the Food for Life Scotland programme, we know that there is an increasingly tough financial climate for public sector caterers particularly. Catering teams are having to make very difficult decisions about ingredient spend, staffing and kitchens. As a result we are already losing skilled catering staff and budgets are being reduced for food provision and capital costs. This means the current good practice as exemplified by the Food for Life Catering Mark award holders is under very real threat. It is incompatible with a national policy and vision to become a ‘Good Food Nation’ if public sector food does not reflect these values and principles. We believe that serious consideration needs to be given to how to protect, maintain and encourage this good practice and enable the wide ranging benefits that are intrinsic to providing good food.

• We need to strike a better balance in food procurement to ensure that better quality and more sustainable food is not always the most expensive option. It remains to be seen how the new Procurement Bill will help support innovation and build more resilient local supply chains and we need to ensure that current procurement frameworks are flexible enough to support caterers who wish to serve fresh, healthy and sustainable food and at the same time provide opportunities and support to local producers to encourage them to bid for contracts.

Secondary school meal provision

• It should be considered whether it is in our nation’s best interests for secondary school pupils to be permitted to leave school grounds at lunchtime with little or no restriction on the types of food served to them nearby; undermining the impact of Local Authorities’ attempts to improve the health and sustainability of their schools’ food.

Infrastructure and supply chains

• The recent collapse of a supply chain for chicken produced in Scotland highlights the inherent contradiction of an aspiration to be a Good Food Nation if we are wholly reliant on imported meat. This is not consistent with the values and ethos of a Good Food Nation and will disempower consumers as a result. Therefore, we propose that a large scale supply chain project designed to support and increase the skills and capacity of our domestic food

industry, is vital. This should also encapsulate essential infrastructure needs such as a network of abattoirs for red meat. Remaining abattoirs are increasingly under pressure of closure, meaning livestock have longer distances to travel, producers are finding it hard to organise private kills and local and organic supply chains are being closed down.

Continuity of good practice

- It’s important to consolidate the existing good work which is happening on the ground in communities and the third sector; helping these groups and organisations build on their achievements and broaden their influence using an existing knowledge and skill base and developing stronger partnerships rather than necessarily starting ‘new’ projects which take time to bed in.

- The independent evaluation of the Fife School Meal Project noted the importance and benefits of collaborative working between stakeholders to manage change associated with innovative public procurement initiatives of this kind. Food for Life Scotland has worked effectively in partnership with a range of public and private sector partners and NGOs including the Fife Diet, Nourish Scotland and RHET to mention but a few. We seek to continue and build on these effective relationships.

Affordability

- Healthy food needs to be more affordable. Eating healthy food now costs three times as much as consuming unhealthy food according to a new study published by Cambridge University – the first study to use UK data to examine price trends by the nutrient composition of foods. The results also show that the absolute price gap between healthy and less healthy foods has widened over the period 2002-2012.

Analyses of UK food spending data by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has shown that, in recent years, all socio-economic groups have changed their purchasing habits to both spend less on food and purchase calories which are both cheaper and less healthy. The Cambridge study concludes that the increase in the price difference between healthy and less healthy foods is a factor that may contribute towards growing food insecurity, increasing health inequalities, and deterioration in the health of the population. As a result, the study recommends that the price of healthy diets and foods ought to be monitored to inform public health nutrition policy. (No such system currently exists in the UK.)

“To help achieve long-term improvements in eating habits, we need to address the high and rising prices of healthier foods, which is likely to be influenced by a number of factors including agricultural policy and production, food distribution, and retail pricing strategies. Additionally, there is growing evidence that targeted subsidies can promote healthy eating for people on low incomes.” senior study, author Dr. Pablo Monsivais, The Centre for Diet and Activity Research (Cambridge)

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How we produce our food

- Food cannot be considered separately to farming and growing. Scientific evidence clearly demonstrates that how we farm affects not only the environment but the quality of our food and human and animal health. A landmark paper published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*\(^ {11}\) in July 2014 concludes that organically grown crops contain significantly higher concentrations of nutritionally desirable antioxidants and lower levels of undesirable cadmium – a toxic heavy metal – and pesticide residues. The peer-reviewed scientific study is the most extensive analysis of the nutrient content of organic and non-organic foods ever undertaken, synthesising the results of many more studies than previous analyses. This analysis is a valuable and timely addition to the ongoing scientific discussion about the benefits of organic food, and makes an important contribution to the information currently available to policy makers and consumers. (The research is available in a summary format\(^ {12}\).)

Antibiotic resistance in farm animals is a growing problem, with far-reaching implications for human health. This fact has been established by decades of research\(^ {13}\) and is acknowledged by organisations including WHO and the European Food Safety Authority. Nearly 50% of all antibiotics are used in farming, primarily in intensive livestock production to compensate for crowded and unnatural conditions on factory farms. Most pigs, poultry and dairy cows receive antibiotics routinely, whether or not they are unwell, and in recent years entirely new E.coli and MRSA superbugs have become major problems on European farms. We suggest a vision that promotes organic and sustainable food and farming systems which:

- Help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase wildlife and biodiversity and protect vital ecosystem services – soil, water and air.
- Produce high quality food with more antioxidants and less undesirable chemical agents including pesticide residue.
- Do not rely routinely on the use of antibiotics and related drugs.

Organic production is an example of a regulated farming system which promotes high animal welfare standards and less intensive farming systems, significantly reducing the need for antibiotics. High Nature Value farming, including organic, also offers advantages of low input methods that favour biodiversity.

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http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FBJN%2FBJN112_05%2FS0007114514001366a.pdf&code=24872492c9c76ca5a8274c4fdabca59


http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VtYm9fPwlPk%3d&tabid=2301

13 The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics: *Antimicrobial resistance - why the irresponsible use of antibiotics in agriculture must stop - A briefing from the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics* (2014)

http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=G9q4uEbSdef%3d&tabid=1841
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?

- Food for Life Scotland is actively supporting and working in partnership with cities, local authorities, schools, care homes and public and private sector caterers to transform food culture and food systems; linking culture, catering, curriculum and communities across kitchens, communities and cities/towns. Further information can be found at [www.foodforlifescotland.org](http://www.foodforlifescotland.org).

- We are undertaking an independent evaluation of the Food for Life Scotland programme to help us build an evidence base for this approach and understand better what works best in practice.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Soil Association Scotland participated in the launch.