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?

Comments

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?

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

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12. What else should be considered?

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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?

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14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

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Becoming a Good Food Nation discussion document consultation

A response from the Fife Partnership – the community planning partnership for Fife.

October 2014

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

A positive, shared vision for Scotland around food could be helpful. One clear aspiration, linking food across several policy areas, would continue to support partnership working around food at the community planning partnership level.

However, any national policy needs to recognise the range and volume of work currently and ensure it does not stifle local responses to local issues.

As the document stands at the moment it doesn’t have a clear vision around tackling food poverty and access to affordable, healthy food. A more balanced approach between food poverty and economic growth should be reflected throughout the document.

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

The vision for a good food nation would be one where everyone had fair and equal access to good food. Where Scottish people are proud of their food culture and there is an end to the proliferation of high energy, low nutrition, low quality food. Where Scotland has built a strong, local food economy with no surplus or waste, where there is increased food export and food tourism and where there is minimum environmental impact, including on biodiversity, from the production of food.

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

The Fife Partnership agrees with the principles laid out within the proposed vision and welcomes a vision which covers different issues relating to food in Scotland. However there is an emphasis on knowledge and commitment rather than access and equality in relation to good food. The vision needs to have a balance between tackling inequality and food poverty, and increasing food tourism and the food and drink economy. There should be a focus on affordable, healthy, sustainable and delicious food being available to all.

The emphasis on improving health and wellbeing in the vision is welcomed but there should be more of a focus on reducing health inequalities alongside economic growth. The reduction in dietary related diseases should perhaps be a measure of this rather than contained within the vision itself.

It is difficult to express a vision if there is not yet an agreed definition of a Good Food Nation and it might be helpful if this was outlined in the final document.
4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

In Fife this would mean:-

- reduction of food poverty and no need for food banks – where everyone can go to a shop or market and buy the food of their choice
- the economic return for Food and Drink businesses is increased, with a wide range of food and drink providers benefiting from increased demand and raised awareness of the benefits of buying locally sourced food
- increased engagement of local communities in food initiatives including allotments and community growing schemes
- equal access to an affordable, healthy diet (including improved skills and knowledge and confidence to make informed food choices) for all groups within our communities, specifically those on a lower income - including older people
- breastfeeding is seen as the norm and maternal and infant health is seen as a priority for giving the best start in life
- healthier food choices for children and young people - especially around schools with obvious links to Better Eating Better Learning and Beyond The School Gate
- better choices of food would be available, with an expansion of the Healthy Living Scheme and Supporting Healthier Choices, encouraging and inspiring people to work towards improving their diets.

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

As already stated Fife Partnership welcomes and supports the discussion document, however as highlighted elsewhere in the document, we are not setting out on a journey, we are taking stock and continuing a journey that has been gathering momentum over several years. Recognising this is essential if everyone is to remain on board. The vision of a Good Food Nation requires commitment from all, along with a desire to change policy and practice around food in Scotland.

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

The role of a Food Commission would need to be clearly defined and consideration taken of any existing bodies to avoid duplication. It needs to be clear how a new Food Commission will interact with other bodies such as Food Standards Scotland (which replaces the Food Standards Agency in Scotland in April 2015), Environmental Health Community (REHIS & local Authority departments), other public bodies and community groups. A coordinated approach is needed.

An advocacy and advisory role would seem to be appropriate for the Food Commission. The influence of supermarkets and global companies needs to be considered to ensure the vision of a good food nation remains the focus – rather than the interests of the global food industry. The tension between ‘for profit’ businesses and the wider health and wellbeing needs of the population would need to be recognised by the Commission.
The Food Commission should consider its role in influencing wider public policy which impacts on people’s right to adequate food, and in holding government to account for its obligations, under international law, to ensure the right to food for vulnerable people.

The Commission should be responsible for carrying out research that could identify how small food and drink producers can access markets through collaboration and also provide guidance to public sector bodies on managing procurement processes.

The promotion of Food and Drink should be supported through Scottish Government’s funding streams; without which progress will be slow. Targets for this funding could be set and monitored through the Food Commission and they could then use successful projects as best practice examples.

The Food Commission could help ensure Scotland’s ability to supply the food locally that it has a reputation to deliver.

The development of a network of local food champions would need to be considered in relation to duplication of existing networks and the time and resources available to engage with this. In Fife community food champions are trained and supported at the community and neighbourhood level. Engaging existing local networks and partnerships in linking with the Food Commission would be preferable to setting up an additional network.

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

As suggested there should be high level indicators across economy, health and wellbeing; the environment and education and training. Community planning partnerships should set their own local indictors through their SOA and local authorities could identify local indicators within their Council plans which would best measure progress against goals. Any indicator set should reflect all current relevant policies and shouldn’t just be around food - but indicators around climate change, environmental issues and waste should be included.

Setting out clear outcomes and goals would be a more important role for the Commission – indictors can always be agreed locally once these are clearer.

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

In relation to the bullet points outlined, celebrating what’s good and exciting about food is not separate to education. The emphasis on healthy, sustainable and delicious food being accessible to everyone is welcomed. However, caring about healthy, sustainable and delicious food is not the issue – affording it is, and this should be reflected in any high level document.

It would be necessary to ensure food manufacturers, retailers, businesses, events organisers etc. are producing and handling food in accordance with regulations and not working against the outcomes of becoming a Good Food Nation and creating a healthier nation. There needs to be better awareness that Environmental Health are there to offer help and offer advice, not just regulate.
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

The areas for initial focus cover a wide range of issues which should ensure commitment from a wide variety of agencies and communities. As well as procurement, there is a role for public sector organisations to use their land for growing fruit and vegetables for public harvest.

The suggestion of yet another policy around children and food seems unnecessary, as highlighted in the text there are already sufficient policies in place with this focus. There could be an emphasis of the importance of food for children within the main policy rather than developing another separate policy.

However the many issues relating to children and food should continue to be seen as high priority, with an emphasis on working with families and increasing their skills and knowledge around what constitutes a healthy diet, and empowering them to make improved food choices.

The development of local food policies, by local partners and related to local issues, would be more useful than another national policy around children.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

There needs to be a focus on communities and place, which includes all community groups, not only families with children. Food should be highlighted as a way of bringing communities and generations together.

Fife has a history of best practice in relation to allotments and community growing. Establishing a growing space can provide a heart for communities – developing social networks, across generations; impacting positively on individual and community health and wellbeing; and providing an opportunity for horticultural skills training. More work could be done on the use of surplus produce, tying in with the development of local distribution schemes.

The Fife Partnership remains clear that local partners are best placed to identify and develop the most appropriate responses for local areas around local growing and distribution projects.

The issue of an increasing population of older people and the importance of diet in keeping people healthy and independent needs to be mentioned within the policy – even if it is not a specific focus.
11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

Buy in and collaboration is critical to the process of becoming a Good Food Nation. It would be essential to get all the key players from all sectors to agree the way forward and work together to achieve the outcomes as opposed to working in opposition to each other.

Skills and training are important within the tourism sector; encouraging local accommodation providers, cafes, restaurants etc. to source food locally can be tackled through innovative skills workshops and this should be encouraged through the policy. Horticultural training could also be incorporated, providing the skills and knowledge within communities to grow produce locally.

12. What else should be considered?

There needs to be a better balance in public sector food procurement to ensure that better quality and more sustainable food is not always the most expensive option. More should be done to encourage the use of local, sustainable foods which would in turn help towards the local economy and preserve jobs.

Food waste and food distribution should be seen as a priority, manufacturers should look at processes to reduce waste and a campaign to promote ‘ugly fruit and veg’ should be investigated to try and change consumer opinions and reduce fruit and vegetable waste just because it doesn’t look good. A similar campaign was run in France with very positive results.

Supply chain development is important for Fife’s food and drink businesses; however there is also an opportunity to extend production to include the supply of food and drink locally. An example here is the lack of langoustines in Fife for the procurement by local food businesses, as they are sold overseas. Scotland needs to be able to supply the food it has a reputation to deliver, visitors will expect to sample locally caught seafood - what we have at the moment is a high demand and low supply. This is another area where the Food Commission could help.

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?

The partners represented on the Fife Partnership will continue to work together around food. Fife Council and the Fife Tourism Partnership will continue to support the activities of Scotland Food and Drink and the Fife Food Network to promote food tourism; partners on the Food and Health Strategy Group will work to implement the local food and health action plan; partners will continue to develop Fife’s allotment strategy and support community food initiatives based on our recent evaluation; work around food in and around schools will be progressed.

We will consider how to roll out examples of good practice at local community level. Evidence has shown us that our investment around food at the local level has had a positive effect on communities, increased skills and supported better food choices - this should be promoted and encouraged.