CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Aiming to be a Good Food Nation is very important to the FCFCG. Food provides an important role in day to day life, and not just because people need food to survive. ‘Good Food’ can have several positive impacts on an individual’s well-being, from immediate and long-term health, to skills development, confidence and empowerment. ‘Good food’ should also mean food that has been grown, cooked and eaten together - it is food that creates connections between people, celebrates the diversity of produce and food cultures that we have in Scotland, and helps to build stronger communities.

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

Success goes beyond everyone knowing what constitutes good food and why – success is also when everyone has the confidence and skills to grow and cook their own food. Success is when communities come together to grow and share food, and share their knowledge and skills around food.

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?

FCFCG supports the proposal to establish a Food Commission. Such a body could help to coordinate activities amongst different umbrella organisations, and highlight areas of best practice. The Commission could also run high profile national campaigns, which are often harder to manage for small or regional scale organisations. We would like to see that there are representatives from the third sector on the commission, and that the commission operates democratically and in a clear way that enables
individuals and organisations to understand its work.

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?

Comments

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

FCFCG agrees with the proposed initial focus, but would also like to see an additional focus on Community Food. Community Food encompasses a broad range of things from community run shops and community cafes to community gardens and allotments. In the last few years there has been a rapid expansion in initiatives and projects aimed at supporting the demand for community gardening and food growing. This is in part due to an upsurge in interest in 'growing your own', as well as an awareness of other issues such as health and well-being and climate change. Community gardens provide a broad range of positive benefits. They can:

- Provide productive, creative, safe, high quality open spaces.
- Produce fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, honey and more.
- Improve physical and mental health in their communities.
- Offer opportunities for people to learn new skills and abilities in a range of skills including food growing and cooking, either informally or on formal accredited training courses.
- Plants and animals can be used to engage a wide range of individuals and instill a sense of responsibility and engagement.
- Provide a valuable tool for bringing people together of different abilities, ages and cultures, thereby aiding in community cohesion and community development.

1 “The true value of community farms and gardens: social, environmental, health and economic” Quayle, H, 2008
- Attract visitors and regular users to an area.

Community Food should be considered as a priority area in itself, and also has strong links to the other priority areas.

**Food in the public sector:** community gardening projects can provide therapeutic opportunities for people in hospital or care, or people who have just left hospital or care, supporting them to grow and eat fresh, seasonal and local food and take part in physical activity\(^2\). The Concrete Garden in Glasgow is embarking on a new project that works directly with local GP surgeries and hospitals to engage patients in food growing for physical and mental wellbeing. Some community gardens and farms are also developing Social Enterprise arms which could become the Small or Medium sized Enterprises providing for public sector contracts in the future, for example the Cyrenians Farm on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

**A children's food policy:** Community gardening projects can provide an excellent opportunity for schools to integrate food into their curriculum. Several projects across Scotland currently support schools to develop community growing projects in their school grounds. The Tullibody community garden run by the Tullibody Healthy Living Initiative in Clackmannanshire is being established in the grounds of the local school, and will provide opportunities for students and the school, and the wider community to grow their own food. Community gardens also provide an important bridge in between school life and home or the wider community. For example, Shettleston Community Garden’s Smelly Welly club, in the East End of Glasgow, provides an afterschool club for children to take part in gardening activities and cook up a pot of soup using ingredients from the garden.

**Local Food:** Community gardens often grow fresh, local produce, and, by allowing contact with fresh food, can help to raise awareness of what local food is and how it is grown. For example, Woodlands Community Development Trust in Glasgow runs a Local Food Social Support project which provides a free weekly meal for around thirty people, cooked by volunteers using fresh produce from their community garden. Volunteers learn about what is seasonal through helping to harvest ingredients fresh from the garden, and are able to take part in growing and sourcing local produce.

**Good food choices:** Behaviour change is complex, and requires different approaches to be effective. Research and evaluation from community gardens often show how effective community gardens can help to trigger and sustain behaviour change around food choices. By being given the opportunity to grow vegetables, people who were once suspicious of trying new things, take pride in the produce they have grown, and can learn recipes and cooking skills to help broaden their diet. It has also been

shown that vegetable consumption is higher among gardeners involved in community gardens, compared to non-gardeners³.

**Continued economic growth**: Community gardens and city farms add to the economic wealth of the area in which they are situated through employment opportunities and increased spending in the local economy⁴. Approximately two thirds of our member organisations employ one or more staff, and there are many more associate organisations running community gardening projects that employ staff. Annual turnover of community gardening projects and organisations can range from £500 to well over £100,000.00. A Social Return on Investment study undertaken for Gorgie City Farm⁵ showed that for every pound invested in the Project by funders, £3.56 of social value is generated. In other words, the value of the investment is more than tripled.

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

12. What else should be considered?

The upsurge in interest in growing your own food has created a very vibrant, rapidly-moving situation with many potential opportunities for new and established community groups, but is also complex and difficult to keep up with. Local people or community groups looking to start up some sort of project in their area may find it hard to hard to fathom what best suits their needs, what suits their community, how to fund the project, and what suits any land they may have identified.

Existing provision of land has proved inadequate in the face of this demand. The Community Empowerment Bill may go some way in helping groups have access to land, though it ought to be recognised that the focus of the Bill is on community ownership, asset transfer and participation requests. Many community food projects operate with volunteers and limited budgets, and for some groups easy access to land on a temporary basis is more suitable, but still hard to achieve. Enabling groups to find the appropriate land with a range of lease or ownership options should be supported.

Encouraging good food choices and changes in behavior is complex and requires several different approaches from national public health messages to local engagement. If we are to achieve a change in people’s food choices we need to go further than aiming for people to ‘know what constitutes good food’ and empower people with skills, experience and confidence to grow, cook and eat to good food.

⁴ “The true value of community farms and gardens: social, environmental, health and economic” Quayle, H, 2008
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 Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) is a registered charity which supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other green spaces. We seek to create opportunities for local communities to grow. FCFCG is a UK wide organisation, and has operated an office in Scotland for 10 years. In Scotland, we have over 70 members, over 650 individuals signed up to our e-bulletin, and many more community gardens, individuals and organisations associated with our work.

We work with community gardens, city farms, community managed allotments and other community groups to help empower local people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to build better communities, often in deprived areas, and to make a positive impact on their surrounding environment. Our work contributes to creating better communities across the UK in both urban and isolated rural areas.

We promote the community farm and garden movement, raising its profile with decision-makers, funders, the public and the media. FCFCG in Scotland provide the secretariat for the Grow Your Own Working Group, which was established to take forward that part of the Scottish Government’s first Food and Drink Policy relating to growing your own food. The Group’s aim is to ensure that allotments and “grow your own” projects are strategically supported and to produce practical advice and best practice guidance on local “grow your own” initiatives.

FCFCG welcomes the opportunity to respond to this discussion document. This response is part based on a consultation event held in partnership with Nourish, aimed at gathering views from members and networks. The consultation session was held on the 12th September at the Hidden Gardens in Glasgow, and included community growing groups and food businesses from across Glasgow.

FCFCG will continue to provide services to our members and other groups seeking to set up or sustain community gardens. We intend to roll out the revised edition of our Community Garden Starter Pack and run training in six areas across Scotland to new and existing groups. We hope to extend our popular Food as a Tool training days which bring together community organisations who want to explore different ways of engaging their communities around food, from cooking outdoors to making home remedies from garden produce. We will also promote the Soil Contamination Guide to community groups who are seeking to grow food on land that may be contaminated.

FCFCG has secured BLF funding for Growing Together, a sustainable funding initiative led by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, which aims to unlock money, land and skills to support community growing. This will enable the FCFCG and Scottish partners to work on ‘hothousing’ fresh, innovative ways for community growing groups to
generate their own income. Over the next two years, Growing Together will promote the widespread uptake of innovative community enterprise; help people develop business and technical skills and offer advice and training on alternative funding approaches. The aim is to help provide community growing groups with the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to move from reliance on grants.

In addition we will continue to seek policy level and stakeholder support for future community growing initiatives. We will continue to work in partnership with a number of other organisations at a range of levels including Trellis, Greenspace Scotland, SAGS, DTAS, SenScot, individual community garden projects and more.

We can also offer to arrange a tour of community gardening and allotment projects for the Food Commission and other interested parties.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Comments