CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

There are clear links between the poor level of health existing throughout Scotland and a poor relationship with food - Fresh, easily available locally produced food priced at a level that the less advantaged householder can afford is a vital component in breaking this cycle of ill health. Any grant funding monies used to jump start the food agenda would quickly be recouped in the savings identified in the Health budget.

There are also increasing issues round food security for the UK impacted as we are by climate change effects not only in the UK but also in our trading partners. As the areas from which we receive our food become more impacted by climate change our inhabitants will find the price and availability of food becoming more difficult for them. A growth in locally produced food could in part mitigate against this.

National economic growth can also be supported by growing our specialist food sector through developing our seafood and farming sectors in a more cohesive manner.

The added value for tourism if the hotel visitor can boast its use of local food of quality enhances the Scottish visitor’s experience and brings financial benefit to the community.

Scotland’s environment is relatively pristine and could be used to the advantage of its inhabitants through local food production at a much higher level than is commonly found today.

Food production and consumption have a profound impact on all our lives and it is vital that we take steps to improve our relationship with food and how it is produced. The cost of food and food security are likely to be major issues in the coming decade.

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

- Lower instances of diet-related health issues
- Productivity across the sector matching the whisky industry
- Reduced amounts of food waste
- Lower CO² emissions
- Reduced reliance on imported food
- Increased procurement of local food by public sector
- Increased production of local food
3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

Yes. It may need some legislative or regulatory push to ensure it is given sufficient priority – although it is part of a low carbon economy which should be covered under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Allotment legislation may need revising to ensure it receives greater priority from local authorities, although we acknowledge that the Community Empowerment Bill will go some way to addressing this.

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

Good Food Shetland:
- Shetland produce being well-known and synonymous with quality in Scotland and across the globe
- More healthy Shetland produce grown and consumed locally
- Maintaining Shetland’s position as a leader in the production and processing of quality, sustainable seafood.
- Shetland is home to a growing number of non-fisheries related food and drink businesses.
- More young people and communities becoming involved and skilled in the production and consumption of healthy, affordable local food.
- Reduced occurrence of diet- and drink-related health issues
- Increased procurement by public bodies of local produce – which would require additional local production to ensure continuity of supply
- Increased consideration of the need for polytunnels in funding bids is required as a standard part of local growing – these are needed in our local climate
- More funded allotment development
- More educational support for those keen to try growing for the first time
- Increased crofter diversification
- Greater participation in food award schemes by local hotels, guesthouses and food outlets – this may mean raising their awareness and abilities first

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

Understand why people in certain groups have poor outcomes in relation to food (eating habits, health etc.) – why is this closely related to other indicators of social disadvantage and deprivation? How does this inform the conversation about food in Scotland?

We also need to support local interest in food growing from people who like the idea but have no practical experience of how to do it, particularly true
where specialist knowledge/equipment may be required for growing in
difficult conditions – as in Shetland

See comments above re raising awareness of food awards and local food
sources amongst local food outlets – hotels, guesthouses, food sellers

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

Clear, consistent communication about why food is an important issue
Engagement in all parts of Scotland to help local people understand the
impacts of food production and consumption and how it applies to them in
their community

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

- Instances of heart-disease, type-2 diabetes, obesity, alcohol-related
  admissions etc.
- Food related CO² emissions
- Food waste
- Economic growth targets in food and drink
- Business start-ups in food and drink
- Some measure of public sector procurement
- Survey results relating to diet/attitudes to food and drink (perhaps
  focusing on lower income brackets)
- Number of allotment sites
- Number of classes on food production
- No of crofters producing food for local consumption
- Number of food outlets/users holding recognised accreditation for
  local food and food of quality
- Amount of local food contracted to by public bodies
- Acreage of land in food production throughout Shetland
- Tonnage of fish/shellfish produced for food consumption
- No of farmers markets/end of farm road food stalls

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

Comprehensive, but perhaps more could be included about food security
and developing ideas to improve it in Scotland

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?
10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

Food security; availability of land on which to grow through better allotment legislation (perhaps a stronger public body duty to make land available); education for the householder who has no knowledge about how to start it.

The cost of healthy food - According to Minimum Income Standard research, people in remote fragile areas have less to spend on essentials due to high travel/fuel costs.

Education – all children and young people should learn basic skills in growing fruit and vegetables and eating healthily.

Wildlife-friendly and environmentally sound farming practices – ensuring that increased production does not come at the expense of the environment

Community Learning and Development – in Shetland, for example, CLD is helping to build community capacity in relation to food and food production through Adult Learning classes on fruit and vegetable growing and our local ‘Transition’ groups. CLD should be a key area for both championing local food production and building community capacity to achieve aims in this area.

Inequalities - Further to the above areas related to CLD and education, the benefits of this policy on helping to reduce inequalities should be emphasised. Supporting and enabling use of community land for local individual food production using "local champions" (people prepared to mentor those with little or no growing skills and help them get started); this could be an application for co-production. There is also merit in setting up tool banks for people on low or no income to access, especially when seeking to cultivate virgin land for the first time where use of powered rotavators etc. may make the difference between success and failure in the very early stages. As well as educating the young, this is also an ideal therapy for recovery from illness and also dealing with mental illness and also could be used to help support unemployed people find value and self-worth.

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

See section 10 above

12. What else should be considered?

National legislation and targets to be included as part of the mandatory reporting of public bodies on the Climate Change Act 2009.
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 Shetland Partnership has a number of thematic groups whose remit overlaps with the aims of Good Food Nation and who are already looking at some of these issues. They will be considering the priorities identified, what implications these have for Shetland and any steps that need to be taken in the short-term.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Scottish Government email