CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?
   
   This is a welcome consultation a logical extension to the food policy documents and its reviews that have been generated over the last 6 years. In Scotland we have a generation whose life expectancy is lower than their parents due to dietary related health problems. We need a our nation to be healthy in order to work and contribute to Scotlands future economic and social success.

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

   1. Dietary related illnesses would be on the decrease
   2. Fewer members of our population would be obese or overweight
   3. We would be proud of our food culture and heritage
   4. Food production and farming would be seen as a good career option for those leaving school
   5. Good food would be available to all in society not just as the preserve of those who could afford it.
   6. A larger area of land in Scotland grew food to feed people rather than animals
   7. Community gardens were the rule and not the exception
   8. Land, in urban and rural areas, would be more readily available to those who wanted grow food on it.
   9. Every child left primary school knowing how to make a pot of soup, how the ingredients got there, and how to grow the vegetables that went into that pot, preferably in the school allotment.
   10. Small scale farmers and food producers fed their local community via public sector procurement in all areas of Scotland.
   11. Organic farming and growing, free from chemicals, was enshrined as the way of choice to preserve our pristine waters and clear air.
   12. Food waste in production and consumption was reduced by at least half current levels.

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

   What is “Good Food”? Not all local food or Scottish food is “Good Food”. This is an important distinction. Good food is fresh, healthy and nutritious, and forms part of the local culture. It does not harm the environment or animal and human welfare in its production.
4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

In our Good Food Nation vision:

1. We see demand for our organic primary produce growing, especially locally, so that we have the confidence to invest in better and more modern premises.
2. We would be able to invest in more land and technology so we can grow a wider range of organic food and more of it. We would diversify the range of crops we grow on our farm moving beyond meat production to include other cash crops appropriate for our land, climate and soil type.
3. We would be able to bid for public sector catering contracts and to supply our local community via schools, hospitals, and a variety of public and private sector catering outlets.
4. We would have built relationships with local schools careers services so that we can offer a range of skilled positions within our business to the next generation of school leavers.
5. We would see a growth in the number of the organic food and farming businesses doing similar things in every county of Scotland.
6. The growth of local food provision would be mirrored by a greater range of independent food outlets across towns and villages especially in remote places in Scotland that people were willing and able to afford to shop in.
7. Our farming industry operates without subsidy.

We can only begin to do this with some kind of medium to long term commitment to local sourcing of sustainably produced food in public procurement. This allows us to develop reliable production plans so we can (re)invest with confidence for our next generation.

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

We need to define what good food is before we start. We suggest that a connection is established between farming and food production methods and the end product interns of nutritional content, and it's environmental impact. We need to value our environmental capital and correctly assess the impact food production methods have on that capital. This requires detailed prospective research into the nutrient content of food grown in a variety of field trials under different production systems, and the losses in nutrient value in processing and distribution.

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

A food commission should be inclusive of all partners in the food production and consumption process. It could have cross speciality working sub groups
so that the catering managers talk to the growers, cooks and consumers. Charitable inclusion is key as is a strong marketing and PR presence. If we are going to change food culture its got been done with people rather than for them.

Measuring current capacity for primary commodities, e.g. tonnes of potatoes produced in Scotland, will identify the gaps in primary production, and measuring processing capacity will identify gaps in processing capacity, e.g. Scottish chicken.

We need a wish list of produce to be grown and processed, and a series of commitments in public procurement before we can begin to create the menus that deliver good food for all.

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

Outcomes

Current government targets on economy, environment, sustainability, procurement reform, health and nutrition, people and society, and education should be incorporated as indicators along the way.

In farming and other areas of primary production, indicators could include increases in business profitability, and number of new entrants to farming.

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

Currently food is seen as fuel in our society. Good food: fresh, healthy and unprocessed, is widely held to be expensive and elitist. We need to nurture organisations and concepts that work on celebrating food culture. With celebration comes the desire to buy in to the concept. The pleasure inherent in good food is everybody’s right. You can use the analogy of the kitchen table as the nation and that it is everyone’s right to have a seat at that ‘good food’ table. Alongside this comes the information about where to access good food, and how to deal with it once you have it.

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 first four points are interlinked and complementary to the goals in being a Good Food Nation and in turn will drive economic growth in food and farming. It will provide the additional bonus of stabilising incomes in farming. This will provide a secure footing for a thriving food industry in Scotland.
10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

We could use the successes we have currently in Scotland as examples on how to move forward. Examples:

1. We are involved in a 5 x primary school Gold Food for Life pilot fun by Fife Council. It has made a big difference to our small on farm butchery diversification. We have been able to plan our production, maximise the value from our cattle, and guarantee employment for our staff. There is also a sense of pride for us in providing ingredients for approx 1000 meals to children every week from our farm. There is an opening here to generate a shift in food culture both from the farmer to raise their standards and for children to connect with the land.

2. We are also a RHET (Royal Highland Educational Trust) farm where we host school visits to educate children about food and farming. We now use staff members to host the visits and there’s a real sense of pride in our staff doing this job, showcasing traditional skills, but also for the children who see that food and farming has real people behind it.

The logical extension of teh RHET visit is a cookery lesson in a field classroom using produce we harvest on the visit. It ties in with the "soup test" mentioned above in section 2. It can be done in a day of school time and can become a rite of passage.

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

We need to establish the link between food and farming as outlined in point 5. Organic food is different, nutritionally, as outlined by a recently published meta analysis in the Journal of Nutrition 2014. We should explore organic farming methods as a significant part of our solution. We also need to look outwards and aspire to be like other nations to help us on our journey. We can look to France and Italy as examples of nations with good food culture. We can learn from the House of food experience in Copenhagen on how to drive change in public sector food provision by engaging all partners in that sector.

12. What else should be considered

Industrial farming has many consequences. The rise in antibiotic resistance is directly...

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?

We are growing new organic cash crops for direct sale to our existing customers. We have planning permission to convert our old farm steading into a farm shop, cafe, educational space and event room. We commit spare time
outside our business to support organisations that promote environmental sustainability, food education, and transition towards a more sustainable food culture. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency in our business so our customers can trust our product.

In short, we will keep on keeping on, and aim to balance short term profitability with investment for the long term. We cannot invest large sums of borrowed money on a supermarket contract. Our experience in organic egg production, begun in 2004, has shown us that commodity production for the multiple retailers does not provide stability of income, and is a system designed to encourage overproduction followed by price squeezes. Farming is for a generation, not for a few years.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Internet. Social media.