CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?
   Absolutely imperative. All countries should strive to be a Good Food Nation. In a global sense, we must put our own house in order.

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

Success will depend a lot on how we use, cherish, nourish, and interact with the land that we have, such that the overriding outcome is one of wellbeing for soil, soul and society. This is in contrast to so much of current patterns and misunderstandings of what stewardship is actually about.

So many of our good policies vaporise (soils, climate, biodiversity, pollution, health, community empowerment) when ultimately, decisions are made at the very local scale.

The question asks - ‘When we get there’. The climate change message is very clear. It is likely that 2 degrees of dangerous climate change will become institutionalised if at all, in which case we might expect higher global temperatures. A Good Food Nation will become limited in its abilities to meet any of its ambitions if we do not integrate a sense of urgency and society wide responsibility to review now how we use, misuse and lose our land. Scotland’s overall wellbeing is at stake and failure to be ambitious enough about our vision for a Good Food Nation in a changing climate (in Scotland and globally) will underline all we have achieved so far and that we hope to achieve in years to come.

A Good Food Nation must base its outlook on tackling climate change, food security and food sovereignty. The latter will help to ensure that many of the economic paradigms and processes that have created so many of the pressures upon people, place and planet wellbeing are addressed.

Some components that will help us determine progress:

ALL good quality Land that is capable of growing food is protected for this purpose and associated ecosystem services (agro-ecological approach, agroforestry).

It is essential that no more good quality land, especially in the peri-urban fringes of Scotland’s settlements go under build development (housing, roads, business parks, retail parks, car parks. This is a finite resource. The principles of Scotland’s soil framework should be upheld.
Spatial plans are offering up vast areas of such good soils to development in complete disregard to the urgent challenges of climate change impacts, soil security and the need for an ethical and just food policy for Scotland.

Those who own land should be held to public account by a desperately needed set of principles for good temporary stewardship, which goes beyond the lifespan of individual owners. The underpinning principle should be to enhance the condition of the soil, given that most of Scotland soils have already been damaged and degraded in some way. Ultimately, a Good Food Nation has to also be a Good Soil Nation. We are not.

Serious consideration has to be given as to for how much longer toxic (just read the labels!) chemicals can be applied to our land. Much of Scotland’s biodiversity has been already diminished by such chemicals and will continue to decline.

When land reform has been implemented so that there is a clear mandate to avoid land that is unused or underused for greater good of long term ecosystem services.

It should be impossible to neglect or damage land. Existing research programmes should be realigned to provide the necessary clear signals for accountability.

When communities across Scotland have access to good quality land to grow food – locally.

When farmers get a good livelihood from growing food and when this is understood as an essential and respected activity by society.

When we see smaller family farms supported.

When growing vegetables – horticulture, especially small scale for the many local markets is given as much support as other forms of land use.

When we are able to demonstrate that we are undertaking a full cost accounting approach to the production of good, safe, healthy, nutritious food affordable and accessible to all.

When the organic approach to food production is the accepted norm. When we see the return of birds, insects, invertebrates, fungi, and other life forms in areas that we use for growing. These areas have been becoming increasingly devoid of biodiversity.

When we see so many more people working in the landscape – learning skills, applying old land based wisdoms, using varieties that make sense in local conditions, undertaking worthwhile activities that create wellbeing benefits across so many agendas that are currently manifesting tired, diminished and negative signals/trends.

When local food is the main choice available on menus across Scotland.
When most of the ingredients in our food are fairly traded, whether they come from Scotland or abroad.

When we see food belts around all Scotland’s cities and major towns. For example the Edinburgh Greenbelt should now become the Edinburgh Food Belt to reflect the most pressing need. It would support Edinburgh as Scotland’s first Sustainable Food City and provide an essential ingredient to all Smart Cities.

When we have community food parks that are fully serviced and supported in ways that business parks are set up for the private sector. Each town will have one. Cities will have many such satellite parks.

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

Only if components outlined above in response to question 2 are included.

‘Scotland would surely benefit from becoming more productive over the coming decades. Scotland’s Uplands are performing well below their ecological and economic potential. It should therefore be a high priority for Scotland to address the condition and productivity of the Uplands so that they can make a significant contribution to the country’s resilience and ability to produce food and other goods in an uncertain future’.

‘The resulting landscape, through its diversity of species, habitats and land uses, would be resilient to future changes and would be capable of underpinning the sort of productive rural economy that will be so important for Scotland in the coming decades and centuries.’


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?

An honest, brave and open appraisal of what we currently have in terms of natural resource base for founding a Good Food Nation. Then recognising that we must do things very different if we wish to be a Good Food Nation
We have to recognise the implications of our exported footprints. In developing a Good Food Nation we must not undermine the right of people, communities, and farmers in other countries to establish, maintain and secure their own food sovereignty.

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

Yes, it could ensure that so many of the comments outlined above are included, and acted upon to guarantee that A Good Food Nation is a nation of good food – wherever it comes from (locally to internationally).

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

See answer to question 2

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

See above

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?

Integrating and acting upon climate change has to be an underpinning ingredient, carried out in such ways that both food security and food sovereignty are delivered.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

   • Support the rapid development of local food systems, putting in place the necessary infrastructure, training, skills, access to land and resources.

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

Recognising the role that ethnic minority diasporas, immigrants and refugees can play, as many have land and food based skills which would fill gaps and enhance existing levels. Land and other resources should be made available to enable a richer more empowered approach to food
growing and systems. We should recognise that there are things we can learn from others at the community level working side by side. By providing mainstreamed opportunities to integrate these skills, Scotland’s ambition towards a Good Food nation will also be more fully inclusive.

12. What else should be considered?

Comments

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?

Promoting messages and local action about climate change as it bears upon the potential of being a Good Food Nation in the longer term.

To promote the Edinburgh Food Belt, and ‘community food parks’ as a potential frameworks to support local food systems

To engage in conversations to promote Scotland as a Good Food Nation and what it means locally in my community, at places of work, but also what this means in an international context and towards food sovereignty

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Through contacts at work, events and newsletters. Through attending Nourish Scotland 2014 Conference.