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# Sustainable Food Chains

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## The Sustainable Food Chains project

Sustain; The Alliance for Better Food and Farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity, and enrich society and culture. Sustain represents over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

This briefing paper is part of an initiative by Sustain, called '*Sustainable Food Chains*' to promote sustainable food, including in public sector catering. More specifically, over the next two years our activities will include;

- Establishing contact with interested bodies at regional, national and European level, currently developing, or planning to develop, policy options.
- Developing policy recommendations for the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to support sustainable food economies, with the future publication of '*Local Food: What are the policy options?*'
- Organising a national conference to discuss and develop policy recommendations.
- Producing a technical manual on public procurement with case studies. This will include a 'How to do it' guide on buying and supplying local/fair trade and organic food including legal and contractual aspects, supply chain issues, and ideas for catering options.
- Establishing two pilot projects. We intend to establish work in tandem with the technical manual, and highlight experience gained at local level.
- Producing briefing papers on local food and public sector catering and the potential for sustainable food providing health, farming, and environmental benefits.
- Advising and negotiating with government at European, national, regional, and local level for changes in policy and action to support the public procurement of sustainable food.
- Responding to consultations from national and European government and others on public procurement issues.

'Sustainable food', for the purpose of this paper, refers to food which meets a number of criteria including;

- **Proximate** – originating from the closest practicable source or the minimization of energy use
- **Healthy** as part of a balanced diet and not containing harmful biological or chemical contaminants
- **Fairly or cooperatively traded** between producers, processors, retailers, and consumers
- **Non-exploiting** of employees in the food sector in terms of pay and conditions
- **Environmentally beneficial** or benign in its production (e.g. organic)
- **Accessible** both in terms of geographic access and affordability
- **High animal welfare standards** in both production and transport
- **Socially inclusive** of all people in society
- **Encouraging knowledge and understanding** of food and food culture

## Contacts and information

The staff members who will be conducting this work are;

Vicki Hird, Policy Director [vh@sustainweb.org](mailto:vh@sustainweb.org)

James Petts, Policy Officer [james@sustainweb.org](mailto:james@sustainweb.org)

Other briefings available as part of this initiative include;

*Briefing 1 Local Food; Benefits, Obstacles and Opportunities*

*Briefing 2 Public Sector Catering; Opportunities and issues relating to sustainable food procurement*

*Briefing 4 The English Regional Development Agencies; What are they doing to support sustainable food economies?*

All documents are downloadable from Sustain's website (<http://www.sustainweb.org>) in pdf format.

Hard copies are available at a cost of £5 each plus £1 postage and packaging or all four for £12, from;

Sustain

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This paper does not necessarily represent the views of Sustain or any of Sustain's members. Although every effort has been made to ensure the information is correct at time of release, the editors cannot be responsible for errors or omissions.

Many thanks to the Sustainable Food Chains' Working Party; David Barling, Joy Carey, Charles Couzens, Tim Crabtree, Anne Dolamore, Sarah Garden, Topsy Jewel, Helen Le Trobe, Julian Oram, Clive Peckham, Paul Sander-Jackson, Sophie Spencer, Judy Steele, Bill Vorley and Lawrence Woodward.

## Introduction

This paper seeks to illustrate how certain working examples in the UK and EU have used the division of contracts, technical criteria such as organic, fresh, products with Protected Food Names (PFNs), environmental purchasing policy and other means to encourage the procurement of more sustainable food. For an overview of the relevant legislation to public procurement please see Sustainable Food Chains, *Briefing 2 Public Sector Catering: Opportunities and issues relating to sustainable food procurement* at <http://www.sustainweb.org>.

## Local and Regional UK Initiatives

### Belfast City Council

In parallel with its Purchasing Strategy, a separate Environmental Purchasing Policy was developed and adopted on 1 April 1998 by Belfast City Council. The Environmental Purchasing Policy has six main points.

- 'Encourage and persuade suppliers to investigate and introduce environmentally friendly processes and products and will educate our suppliers concerning the Council's environmental strategy.'
- 'Ensure that suppliers' environmental credentials are considered in the Supplier Appraisal process.'
- 'Ensure that, where appropriate, environmental criteria are used in the award of contracts.'
- 'Specify, wherever possible and reasonably practicable, the use of environmentally friendly materials and products.'
- 'Ensure that consideration is given to inclusion, within all specifications, of a facility for potential suppliers to submit prices of environmentally friendly alternatives.'
- 'Ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the costs and benefits of environmentally friendly alternatives.'

This policy gives the opportunity for more sustainable food to be favoured due to the reduced environmental effects of production, processing, and transportation, although it cannot specify locality or nationality of supplies. With respect to environmental improvement, the Council have evidence that 75% of their local small to medium size enterprises (SMEs) are now pursuing a 'green' business agenda. The Council argues that local suppliers have become more competitive as a result of these initiatives and has evidence of an average 10% reduction in costs. However, it is unclear at this point, how much of this relates to food.

*Contact: Raymond Forbes, Development Department, Belfast City Council, 02890 320 202 ext. 3622 [forbesr@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:forbesr@belfastcity.gov.uk)*

### Birmingham Food Links

As part of a wider project looking at the feasibility of developing local economies in certain areas, some work is being carried out in the West Midlands to try to encourage the procurement of local food by local public bodies. The project is at present looking into the various UK laws governing the contract process, and whether the adoption of location as a specification in the contract and evaluation process, for contracts below EU procurement thresholds, is prohibited or not. The project is also researching the most promising markets for local food in the region, and is looking into the various supplier and multi-stakeholder co-operatives that could help to provide an efficient and competitive supply chain.

*Contact: Richard Cave-Bigley, 0121 429 6364, [rcavebigley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rcavebigley@yahoo.co.uk)*

### Common Cause Cooperative Feasibility Study, Sussex

Common Cause Co-operative will be conducting a feasibility study and running small-scale activities linking local producers and school meal provision in Sussex. The programme of work starts later in 2002 and will run until mid 2005.

*Contact: Topsy Jewel, Common Cause Cooperative Ltd, 01273 473351, [comcause@element.u-net.com](mailto:comcause@element.u-net.com) or see <http://www.commoncause.co.uk>*

## Cornwall Healthcare Trust Food Manufacturing Study

This feasibility study by Cornwall Healthcare Trust aims to develop plans for a local supply network, processing, and storage facilities along with distribution services for NHS meals in Cornwall. There are two Healthcare Trusts and three Primary Care Trusts in Cornwall covering 26 hospitals. The Support Services for the NHS in Cornwall are provided on a community-wide basis and Cornwall Healthcare Trust (CHT) is responsible for catering advice and services. It will:

- Work in partnership with local producers, suppliers and distributors to produce a comprehensive development plan
- Look into the possibility of purchasing and processing a much greater percentage of food from within Cornwall
- Work closely with business development bodies to ensure the Trust's plans comply with local strategic plans
- Study the labour needs of any potential development
- Examine the four options identified for production, storage and distribution of NHS meals in Cornwall, which are;
  1. Continuing current production/procurement methods
  2. Expanding on current production methods and developing a new distribution network
  3. Developing a retail park to supply all the NHS Trusts with meals
  4. Researching the possibility of forming a partnership with an existing food supplier

*Contact; Nathan Harrow, Cornwall Healthcare Trust, 01872 25 2767, [nathan.harrow@rcht.swest.nhs.uk](mailto:nathan.harrow@rcht.swest.nhs.uk)*

## Cornish Schools

Cornwall County Council's in-house service provider, Commercial Services, is backing local food suppliers as part of a £1 million contract to supply school meals to 32 county primary and secondary schools. To date, three year contracts, worth a total of approximately £350,000 a year, have been awarded to four local suppliers for fresh meat, groceries and provisions, frozen foods, and vegetables. All met the local authority and EU regulations for food procurement by being won on commercial grounds. Jayne Jago, commercial manager, says 'Our aim from the outset was to use local supplies where possible. We wanted to ensure our children were being offered good, fresh, locally-grown Cornish food that hadn't been transported from miles away'.

One of the difficulties that Jayne and her team have had to overcome is getting local producers to take advantage of the policy - 'For the milk contract, we sent out 31 tendering documents, 21 of them to local producers. Only one company responded, and it wasn't Cornish'. Ian Doble of Doble Quality Foods of St Agnes, the contractor for frozen food, adds however, 'It is often assumed that, in order to keep prices low, large catering organisations have to buy in bulk from national suppliers, even from abroad. Fortunately, we have been able to disprove this. Everyone wins – the schools and the children get high quality fresh food, the local economy gets a boost, and there are even fewer trucks journeying all over the country'.

*Contact; Jayne Jago, Commercial Services. 01872 323178, [jjago@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:jjago@cornwall.gov.uk)*

## East Anglian Schools Fruit and Meals Scheme

East Anglia Food Link (EAFL) is looking at the feasibility of a project in Norfolk to increase the amount of local, organic, and fairly traded produce as part of the Department of Health's National Schools Fruit Scheme.

EAFL is also developing the supply chain for wider sustainable public sector catering systems working with the following partners: Norfolk County Services, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire County Council Environmental Education Services, local fruit growers, Norfolk Healthy Schools, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Health Authorities, and growers' cooperatives and farmer organisations in East Anglia France, Spain, Italy, and the Windward Islands.

The main aims of the pilot projects are:

- To buy local and/or organic and/or cooperatively traded fruit
- To distribute the fruit to clusters of schools in East Anglia, where appropriate, using existing local suppliers and involving them with the management of the scheme
- To develop short and long term production planning strategies to increase the percentage of locally and sustainably supplied fruit
- To organise the distribution of fruit within schools, using existing caterers where applicable
- To develop complete supply packages for school and other public sector meals systems

*Contact: Clive Peckham, East Anglia Food Link, 01953 889 200, [eafl@gn.apc.org](mailto:eafl@gn.apc.org)*

## **Harrogate Borough Council**

Harrogate Borough Council operates a Local Purchasing Policy. This means that, wherever possible, purchasing managers within the Council ensure that local firms are given an opportunity to bid for contracts to supply goods or services. The Council is obliged by law to accept the lowest tender or quote consistent with an appropriate quality threshold, but ensures that local firms are given an opportunity to compete.

In addition, the Economic Development Unit compiled the 2000/2001 Harrogate District Business Directory, containing information on approximately 1,600 businesses located within Harrogate District. The directory will be used by Harrogate District Council as a vital source for responding to requests for information about local suppliers of products and services.

*Contact: Economic Development Unit 01423 556077 or [ed06@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:ed06@harrogate.gov.uk)*

## **Llanidloes Hospital and Llandrindod High School, Powys**

Following on from a successful 'Food Futures' project, a new partnership in Powys aims to establish how public agencies can provide meals with more local and/or organically grown ingredients. It will explore what is possible and legal within the current national, EU, and international regulatory framework. The partnership consists of Dyfed Powys NHS Healthcare Trust, Powys County Council, the Soil Association, and the University of Wales. The University will conduct the research into legislation (See UK-wide Initiatives: Public Procurement in Local Agri-food Chains) whilst the Soil Association and purchasing and catering staff in Powys will work on two pilot projects, one at Llanidloes Hospital and the other at Llandrindod High School to organise a menu with more local and organic produce in the recipes.

Llanidloes Hospital has been chosen because of enthusiasm by the chair of the healthcare trust, good contacts with other stakeholders, and because it does its own cooking. When the hospital contracts were up for renewal at the hospital, they were advertised in local papers and to producers on the Food Futures database. However, it has been difficult to find a good diversity and consistency of local produce, and there is a shortage of suitable processing facilities. The partnership hopes to address these problems during the course of the project and as it gains momentum. The partnership was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March at Llanidloes Hospital.

*Contact: Richard Pitts, Powys Food Links, 01597 827573, [richardp@powys.gov.uk](mailto:richardp@powys.gov.uk)*

## **Mapledene Early Years Centre, Hackney, London**

Mapledene Early Years Centre is a local authority early excellence centre in Hackney catering for children from ages six months to five years. It offers five meals a day prepared on the premises, which are now 70-80% organic, the menu has a four week rotation. The organic food is all bought from a Waitrose supermarket in a neighbouring borough. The decision to buy from Waitrose appears to have been taken because they were able to offer an accessible range and quantity of products to meet the school's needs.

The decision to go organic has come from a holistic approach to the children's education and care adopted by the centre and in particular its Principal. Whilst the centre is careful not to make any claims about the beneficial health and performance effects of the food, it is clearly a reason why many parents

are choosing the centre and why it is so popular. The food cannot be separated from other educational and social objectives and its wider role as part of the local community. The food served reflects the multi-cultural nature of the centre, what the children will eat, and what is allowed under the school meals nutritional guidance.

*Contact: Mapledene Early Years Centre, Hackney, London. Fax No Only; 020 7254 4341*

## **Norfolk County Service**

Mentioned in the report of the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, since February 2000, Norfolk County Services have set a number of local purchasing objectives.

Although the service cannot specify 'local' produce, they encourage their main suppliers to:

- Use local produce as far as practically possible
- Use contractors who have depots or outlets within Norfolk
- Deliver at specific times with no minimum drop

These objectives are in support of the County Council's Best Value policy.

*Contact: Chris Cope, Norfolk County Services, 01603 222586 [chris.cope.ncs@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.cope.ncs@norfolk.gov.uk)*

## **Somerset Schools**

Somerset Food Links commissioned a feasibility study to consider whether more local food in the schools meals provision could be a reality in Somerset.

The study looked at;

- Current school meal provision in Somerset
- Capacity of local producers to supply school food
- Food education activities
- Parents' and children's views on school meals
- Local, organic school meals in France and Italy

The main conclusions from the study were;

- Parents would prefer school meals to include more fresh and less processed food
- Caterers are concerned about the cost of local food, the increased workload, and whether pupils would like the food
- Pupils have a diverse range of tastes. While many prefer snack style foods, others enjoy full meals
- Local producers could supply ingredients at prices competitive with conventional supplies, but would need support in processing and distribution
- In France, Italy and the USA school meals made from local and organic produce have led to an increase in pupils eating school meals

The main recommendations from the study were;

- Establishment of a local producers' cooperative to supply caterers
- Substitution of local ingredients in popular snack foods such as pizza and burgers
- Production of a food education pack for teachers and caterers
- Formation of a working group to take forward these and other recommendations

As well as the feasibility study, trials of local school food were carried out in three schools as part of a 'Somerset Harvest Week' in 2001, also involving educational activities (farm visits, talks by local producers, and workshops on food miles).

*Contact: Paul Sander-Jackson, Somerset Food Links, 01458 257 439, [paul.sanderjackson@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:paul.sanderjackson@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

## South Gloucestershire Schools

*Extract from an article in the Western Daily Press 21/04/02*

'Pupils at schools across South Gloucestershire will today be served up roast beef sourced from the county and locally-grown fruit is set to follow. The new menu is part of an award-winning scheme by the council which aims to meet the needs of the community from within itself without harming the environment. The council is one of ten running schemes across England and Wales to win a National Grid 21 Award to encourage sustainability.'

*Contact: Kay Knight, South Gloucestershire County Council, 01454 868686, [k\\_knight@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:k_knight@southglos.gov.uk)*

## St Peter's Primary School, East Bridgeford, Nottinghamshire

St Peter's Primary School is committed to sourcing more of its food from local farmers, which has proved a popular move with the parents and pupils. The school currently purchases all its meat requirements locally (Christies Farm shop in Hockerton 5 miles away) and the school now purchases all its potatoes, and much of its vegetables locally.

This has been made possible since the school opted out of Local Authority funding, and decided to hold its own catering budget. The move to purchasing more local food has not led to a large increase in the cost of producing the meals – a hot meal retails at the school at £1.55. The school has been able to negotiate a good price based on the fact that they are ordering a regular supply from the farm shop. The farm shop delivers all the supplies direct to the school.

Jeanette Orrey, the catering manager, says 'We believe St Peter's is the only school in the country to support local farmers in this way and we have the full backing of parents who are regularly invited to see for themselves the quality of the food with which the children are served. The parents, like the staff are keen to support local businesses'.

*Contact: Jeanette Orrey, St Peter's Primary School, 01949 21182*

## Sutton Borough Council

Sutton Borough Council has pursued an environmental purchasing policy since November 1999 which is applicable to all contracts. To quote; 'The Council has a leading role to play in promoting environmental improvement. Locally it is a major purchaser of goods and services and spends about £90M in each year. Many of these have significant effects on the environment. As a responsible purchaser it is our responsibility to minimise negative impact. Indeed EMAS [Environmental Management System] recognises purchasing as a key activity and expects us to demonstrate best practice.'

Two relevant aspects of the policy are;

- 'To specify products which:
  - are the most energy efficient available;
  - produce low emissions;
  - cause minimal damage to the environment in their production, distribution, use, disposal and
  - have a "Fair Trade" mark where appropriateSo long as current requirements for value for money and quality are met.'
- And 'In the first instance, *to look* to purchase products and services locally to reduce environmental impacts and support the local economy and businesses.'

The Council does not, however, have any specific policy related to the purchase of food.

*Contact: Jim Glass, Procurement Policy, [jim.glass@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:jim.glass@sutton.gov.uk)*

## UK-wide Initiatives

### Catering for Health Guide

This guide was developed by the British Nutrition Foundation with funding from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department of Health (DH). *Catering for Health* was developed as a source of information and practical ideas for chief lecturers and others to enable them to incorporate healthy catering practices into different areas of catering and cookery courses. This includes National Voluntary Qualifications (NVQs) for the catering and hospitality industry as well as other courses.

The aim of the guide was to support chief lecturers to encourage their students to;

- Be aware of the importance of food in the maintenance of health and overall well-being
- Recognise the potential benefits for both caterers and consumers from providing a choice of healthier options
- Learn about ingredient selection and methods of food production that can produce healthier options
- Demonstrate and apply relevant skills and knowledge when planning, preparing and serving healthier foods

Over 6000 copies of the guide have been distributed over a period of six months and it is currently being reprinted.

FSA officials have met with representatives of the Hospitality Training Foundation (HTF) and Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA). Both organisations are responsible for developing standards for awarding bodies. Chadwick House Group Ltd (the commercial arm of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) is developing an in service course which will be loosely based upon Catering for health, aimed at those currently in catering employment rather than new caterers.

*Contact; Robert Rees, Food Standards Agency, 020 7276 8000 [Robert.rees@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.rees@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)*

### Eat the View

Eat the View is a Countryside Agency project, launched in July 2000, and running for five years.

It has the following objectives:

- increased consumer awareness of the links between the products they buy and the countryside they value;
- increased demand for locally and regionally distinctive products which originate from systems of land management that are sustainable;
- improved marketing for locally and regionally distinctive products by, for example, direct marketing by producers, development of supply chain partnerships, and accreditation and product branding initiatives
- enhanced marketing opportunities for producers and growers as a result of product identity with land management systems that promote the character, diversity and environmental value of the landscape.

The projects in the Eat The View programme include those listed below. Many are delivered by or in partnership with other organizations.

- Regional Food Groups - Partnership with Food from Britain
- Support for the National Association of Farmers Markets
- Local Food Works (See below)
- Working with the Farm Retail Association
- Land Management Initiatives
- Race to the Top Initiative
- Branding Protected Landscapes Forum
- Branding the Products of Protected Landscapes - Peak District and Cotswold Pilot Projects



- Eco-Lots –an online magazine
- Tourist Attitudes towards Regional and Local Foods
- Foreign Product Labelling Schemes and their Applicability to the United Kingdom
- Eat the View Consumer Survey
- Setting Up Initiatives for the Collaborative Marketing of Local and Regional Products

Contact: James Marwick [james.markwick@countryside.gov.uk](mailto:james.markwick@countryside.gov.uk) , also various regional offices, see <http://www.eat-the-view.org.uk>

## FLAIR

Food and Local Agriculture Information Resource (FLAIR) is a project by f3 – the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives to:

- develop a national directory and database of local food enterprises and projects
- produce an annual report on the size, nature and growth of the local food sector
- organise a national conference on local food

The first year of the project (2000/01) developed a prototype database for the directory, and ran the first national conference – the report from which (Local Food and Sustainable Development) can be found on the website. The second national conference (Joined Up Eating) report can also be found on the website.

In the second year (2001/2002) a survey of the sector will begin to assess indicators of trends within the sector and what helps and hinders its development. The results of the survey will be detailed in the FLAIR report, *The Local Food Sector; Its Size and Potential*, expected to be published in mid 2002.

In the third and final year, a national network of local food initiatives is expected to have emerged which will act as an advocate of the sector, support more effective networking between initiatives, and effect a change in the perception of the sector amongst national and regional agencies and local councils. The national conference is planned for mid-September.

As well as the FLAIR project, f3 run an email group for those involved and interested in local food, and they have also recently produced a list of local produce directories. For more information see their website at <http://www.localfood.org.uk>.

Contact: Charles Couzens, f3, 0845 458 9525, [charles.couzens@localfood.org.uk](mailto:charles.couzens@localfood.org.uk)

## FSA/LGA Policy Group

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Local Government Association (LGA) share the aim of promoting the production of, and access to safe, sustainable, and nutritious food. In recognition of this, they will undertake work together and support each others respective work on these issues.

The policy areas covered by this work are:

- Community leadership
- Sustainability – Local Agenda 21
- Economic, Social and Environmental Well being, Powers and Social Inclusion
- Community Education
- Local Government as Employers
- Enforcement
- Economic Regeneration and Promotion of Local Tourism

Contact: Tom Murray, Food Standards Agency, 020 7276 8980, [tom.murray@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tom.murray@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

## Local Food Works

A new partnership project between the Soil Association and the Countryside Agency is addressing the needs of the local food sector by creating a more effective and collaborative framework within which local food initiatives can develop. It will build on the work of the Soil Association's Local Food Links project and

Food Futures programme and will form part of the Countryside Agency's Eat the View project (See above).

The objectives of the project are the:

- Development of sustainable systems of production and marketing that maintain rural food economies;
- Encouragement of community-based production and marketing systems which directly link farmers and consumers and encourage local employment and social equity;
- Creation of new market opportunities for sustainable land management which respect and enhance local landscape features and encourage locally distinctive products;
- Expansion of organic and other forms of sustainable farming by providing advice and fostering stable markets.

The project offers information and a network of development expertise, focussing on facilitation, enabling and capacity-building. Support is available throughout England, and the service is flexible in how it responds to individual and community needs and circumstances.

**Network Development** includes advice on how to set up, manage, and develop a local food network, assistance with identifying and engaging members, practical help with organising meetings and networking activities, tailored assistance with developing an existing network and advice on sources of funding.

**Information Services** are available in various formats for use by the networks including briefing sheets, best practice, 'how to' guides, case studies, research and newsletters.

*Contact: Local Food Works, Soil Association, 0117-9142425, [ADaniel@SoilAssociation.org](mailto:ADaniel@SoilAssociation.org)*

## Public Procurement in Local Agri-food Chains: Learning the Lessons from Europe

The key aims of this project being undertaken by Cardiff University are to:

- understand better the role which public procurement plays in creating/sustaining local agri-food chains in dynamic EU regions
- examine what lessons these EU experiences might hold for the agri-food strategy in Wales

The project is motivated by the belief that certain areas of the EU (Tuscany, Denmark & Northern Ireland in particular) have used quality considerations to interpret creatively EU public procurement regulations which specify among other things that contracts of £144K or more at an operational level have to be advertised in the Official Journal of the EU.

The project aims to distil the lessons from the three EU case studies to examine what more could be done in Wales to promote localised agri-food chains through innovative public procurement. To avoid re-inventing the wheel, the project will iterate with and build up, the research work on public procurement being conducted by the National Assembly, Cardiff Business School and DEFRA which, commissioned the research on the public procurement of food in the NHS.

The project aims to provide policy-makers and agri-food practitioners in Wales with the specialised knowledge to design and deliver public procurement policies which foster, rather than frustrate, local economic development in the regions of Wales.

*Contact: Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University, [MorganKJ@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:MorganKJ@Cardiff.ac.uk)*

## Sustainable Food Procurement in the NHS

The project has been commissioned by the Sustainable Development Commission, a multi-sector group with twenty-two members and supported by a secretariat of ten people, and is being carried out by Liverpool University. It will be the first of a series on sustainable food procurement and will investigate the

potential for the NHS to contribute to sustainable development through its purchasing of food. It will build on earlier work by the King's Fund which suggests that, at least in deprived areas, the NHS can improve public health through its purchasing policies, e.g. by supporting and boosting employment.

The project has two phases. The first will consider the nature of a sustainable food procurement policy and the second will seek to apply this outline policy to current NHS procurement practices, and to consider how these might be modified to improve future sustainability. The key questions the project hopes to answer are;

- How far are current food procurement standards and policies within the NHS consistent with a model of sustainable food procurement policy?
- In what ways could the NHS's contribution to sustainable development be improved through the sustainable procurement of food?
- What can be done within existing public procurement policies and rules, and what changes would be required in order to make a greater contribution to sustainable development?
- What other barriers exist to sustainable food procurement by the NHS?

The project has produced a report detailing its findings, incorporating case studies from around the UK (For a summary see <http://www.sd-commission.gov.uk/pubs/fp/index.htm>). It has also contributed to a King's Fund event held on 15 May 2002, and will also contribute to DEFRA's Public Procurement Working Group (See Above).

*Contact: Claire Wilding, Sustainable Development Commission, [Claire.Wilding@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Wilding@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Also see <http://www.sd-commission.gov.uk>*

## **Sustainable Food Chains**

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- Establishing contact with interested bodies at regional, national and European level, currently developing, or planning to develop, policy options.
- Developing policy recommendations for the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to support sustainable food economies, with the future publication of '*Local Food: What are the policy options?*'
- Organising a national conference to discuss and develop policy recommendations.
- Producing a technical manual on public procurement with case studies. This will include a 'How to do it' guide on buying and supplying local/fair trade and organic food including legal and contractual aspects, supply chain issues, and ideas for catering options.
- Establishing pilots project within two districts or counties. The project intends to establish work with at least two institutions, in tandem with the technical manual, and highlight experience gained at local level.
- Producing briefing papers on public sector catering and the potential for sustainable food providing health, farming, and environmental benefits.
- Advising and negotiating with government at European, national, regional, and local level for changes in policy and action to support the public procurement of sustainable food.
- Responding to consultations from national and European government and others on public procurement issues.

*Contact: James Petts or Vicki Hird, Sustain, 020 7837 1228 or [james@sustainweb.org](mailto:james@sustainweb.org)*

## **Sustainable Procurement Group**

The purpose of this interdepartmental group, established at the request of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Margaret Becket, in November 2001, is to consider how Government bodies can carry out the procurement of goods and services in a manner that supports the Government's policy and objectives for sustainable development.

To this end, the Group's terms of references include consideration of;

- a policy framework which formally integrates the Government's objectives for procurement and sustainable development;
- the structure and methods by which this integrated policy approach can be delivered most effectively in practice;
- particular areas of procurement which should be initial priorities for action, in terms of their potential for quick results in improving supply from the market and demonstrating Government leadership and,
- particular action which would promote innovation in the market and overcome inertia in purchasing practice.

The Group is expected to report in 2003, jointly to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Chief Secretary to HM Treasury. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the recommendations will inform the procurement section of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate.

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## European and International Initiatives

### Austria

The City of Vienna runs the EcoPurchasing project which is part of its KlIP Climate Protection Programme. Within the project, the city authorities decided to increase the share of organically grown food used in its public facilities with a target of 30% by 2005. The project involves all municipal departments and enterprises of the City of Vienna including its hospitals, schools, day care centres, and nursing homes.

Increasing the share of organic food to 30% was found to raise the overall food bill by 10%, although this is expected to fall in the future. For meat products, emphasis is placed on compliance with animal welfare regulations and biological feeding criteria in livestock keeping. Market analysis of the scheme has been undertaken to investigate whether organic food is available in sufficient quantities to carry out such a large-scale project, and to look into the seasonal availability of supplies and the expected price variations over time.

The Vienna Hospital Association and the Board of Old-age Homes in Vienna have been gradually increased their commitment to organic food at their facilities since 1996 and the Rosenhügel Neurological Hospital has raised its share of organic food to 60%. They have found growing levels of patient and staff satisfaction with the meals.

See [http://www.klip.wien.at/english/verwaltung/vw\\_lebensmittel.htm](http://www.klip.wien.at/english/verwaltung/vw_lebensmittel.htm) (English Version)

### Denmark

The Danish Government's Action Plan for organic farming made several recommendations which have been the catalyst to greater procurement of sustainable food. These included; a national information system (newsletters, seminars, training for catering staff, and a telephone 'hotline' for smaller caterers), cooperation between public institutions and organic suppliers, funding, and planning for large quantities of food in advance. Under the Action Plan, the government established a fund (£3,5m) to pay for some of the costs of converting public sector catering to use organic food, initially to schools but subsequently to other institutions, which covered the costs of training catering staff, changing menus, and analyses of conversion.

The scheme has been highly successful with 60% of all municipalities involved to some extent and some entire cities converting to the new regime, many with no apparent increase in running costs. The conversion has been driven by a desire to; reduce groundwater pollution, develop a strong domestic and export market for organic food, and respond to the demand of the health and social services sector, especially from institutions serving the young, elderly, and ill. The new menus have resulted in an increase in the consumption of fruit and vegetables and a fall in the consumption of meat.

Together with the Organic Action Plan, Denmark operates a company called National Procurement Ltd. This enterprise, owned by the Ministry of Finance and the Local Government Association, offers strategic support and green purchasing options for local authorities.

See <http://www.ski.dk/english> (English Version)

### France

In 1993, to make meals using the best possible ingredients, one local authority in the Gard region of Northern France and the EU together launched 'Manger-Bio', a scheme linking local producers with consumers. Local, organic farmers, who, until the scheme got under way, were exporting 70% of their produce, began a pilot project to supply a leisure centre canteen with organic fruit and vegetables and in 1997 they had delivered 45-50,000 meals. Manger-Bio has further stimulated local trade by supplying organic dry goods through Bio Co-op –a federation of independent organic consumer co-ops. A national distribution network is developing and more and more institutions are becoming involved.

In 1998, the Centres d'Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et le Milieu rural (CIVAM) worked with dieticians on a nutrition programme looking to supply a hospital with local, organic produce. In addition, another study compared the behaviour of pupils at schools involving two 'organic' and two 'conventional' canteens. One school in Nimes introduced organic food and changes to the menu gradually and has found that more children are eating at school, not least because they have more confidence in the food. Manger Bio is often able to supply organic school meals for a small increase in the current cost. The costs are kept low by recipe changes to meals using less meat and fish.

One of the main difficulties for the scheme has been the coordination of deliveries because of a lack of specific venues and equipment. In order to overcome this a directory of suppliers was compiled in 1997, also assisted by the creation of an autonomous producer organisation with a legal structure allowing producer groups to cooperate on marketing, whilst buying in produce.

Another difficulty has been the logistical problems of packing, abiding by the European food safety regulations, and storage. In 1999, the local council built a kitchen which helped overcome this. Other essential elements for the scheme to be a success have been educating producers about food quality and how it needs to be presented, training kitchen staff to use organic ingredients in order to keep their flavour and nutrients, and informing the parents about the need for varied and balanced meals.

*For more information contact CIVAM on 00 33 4667 74783 or [civam.lr@wanadoo.fr](mailto:civam.lr@wanadoo.fr) or see <http://www.civam.org/mouvement/index/> (French Only)*

## Italy

Perhaps the best example of what can be achieved with an appreciation of good food and appropriate legislation is in Italy. It was the first EU nation to develop a sustainable school meals system beginning in 1986 and was motivated by a desire for safe, sustainable food prompted by various food scares in the US and EU such as BSE and GMs.

New laws passed in Italy have obliged local authorities to include organic and quality local products in their menus. Each Italian region is now in the process of formulating, and in some cases presenting a similar law which will insist on the use of organic and/or certified local products within public sector catering. There are now over 300 examples of organic school meals services in Italy, mainly in the North and the Centre of the country, but now expanding to the South and the Islands. Many of these only use organic fruit and vegetables but many of them have reached 80, 90 and some even up to 100% organic ingredients.

In broader terms, one in five Italians eats in a public canteen every day, and if schools and other places of education are included one in three Italians eats in a public or work canteen. This means a total of two billion meals every year, with about a quarter of these being in schools. The City Government of Rome is currently offering for tender about 120,000 meals per day for an organic school meals service. These initiatives have also shown the potential for waste reduction through careful planning of menus around local/organic food with subsequent cost reductions and less landfill.

In one example, a town called Ferrara with a population of 133,000, began by commissioning a feasibility study then established a list of foods that could be used without significantly increasing costs. After two years, 50% of the food was organic with this rising to 80% for nurseries. The conclusion of many in Ferrara has been that public procurement is possible without incurring excessive increases in costs; the price of a meal has only risen by an average of 13.4%

*For more information about schools meals in Italy, contact the Italian Association for Organic Agriculture, 00 39 06863 29403 or <http://www.aiab.it> (Italian Only)*

## Japan

In Japan, the Green Purchasing Network (GPN) was established in February 1996 to promote green purchasing among consumers, companies and governmental organisations. As of June 1998, it had about

15,000 member organisations. GPN promotes the ideas and practices of green purchasing, develops purchasing guidelines for different products, publishes environmental 'Data Books' on various products, runs seminars and study meetings, and has an award scheme for implementing green purchasing.

See <http://www.wnn.or.jp/wnn-eco/gpne/index.html>

## Sweden

In 1998, the Swedish Government held a public commission into the procurement of sustainable food which has subsequently produced a number of reports in the area. One of the reports concluded that procurement of sustainable food was strategically important as it would improve the national environmental indicators, and that the greatest benefit would be achieved by a gradual transition, adjusting the menus to include seasonal produce. It also identified that the public sector could encourage the growth of sustainable agriculture and a reduction in prices because it can plan ahead and hence guarantee demand.

The commission has produced an internet guide and a model procurement policy for all types of institutions in the public sector. The government has provided a fund of £600,000 to develop initiatives and some schools and hospitals are now serving meals with local and organic ingredients.

See [http://www.hallbarasverige.gov.se/eng/vagar\\_till/upphandling/upphandling.htm](http://www.hallbarasverige.gov.se/eng/vagar_till/upphandling/upphandling.htm) (English Version)

## United States of America

### Community Food Security Coalition's 'Farm to School' Program

The major goals of the Farm to School Program are to partner local farmers with nearby schools, so that: 1) children can enjoy tasty fruits and vegetables, while connecting with farms - the source of their food; and 2) farmers can develop an additional source of income. Towards that end, the Program will provide training and technical assistance to encourage farm to school projects in numerous communities throughout the USA.

Some examples of Farm to School projects are:

- The Farmers' Market Salad Bar in Santa Monica, California. The produce is purchased at the farmers' market twice weekly to provide for a daily salad bar with California grown produce. The scheme is organized by the Occidental Community Food Security Project and has now been replicated in other schools in Los Angeles.
- In North Carolina, the state legislature gave grants to schools to purchase farm products. This initial jump-start led to continuing purchases of farm produce, with the state Department of Agriculture providing transportation, warehouses, and administrative services. Organized by USDA and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.
- The New North Florida Cooperative was formed by local small farm operators to sell produce to schools. They provide turnip and collard greens that are fresh, washed, chopped, and bagged - as well as strawberries and melons - to the local school district.

The project has produced a report *Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids; Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities for Farm-to-School Programs*. It includes a review of existing Farm to School projects nationwide, the barriers and opportunities for school food services to purchase food directly from local farmers, and policy recommendations.

See [http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm\\_to\\_school.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html)

### Institutional procurement projects in Iowa

*Extract from a paper by Rich Pirog presented at 'From Farm to School Cafeteria', Cornell University*

Several Iowa farmers had been selling fresh produce and other foods to restaurants and institutions for a number of years, but this work was not organized in a way that allowed other producers, chefs, and food

service directors to learn from the experience. That changed in 1997 with the first Iowa project focused on institutional buying. In the past four years the number has grown so that there are now have over a dozen projects in this area. Locally grown food is provided to a variety of institutions including colleges and universities, nursing homes, hospitals, corporate cafeterias, conference centers, hotels and restaurants, state government-run institutions (prisons, county cafeterias), and place of business subscription enterprises.

*For the full paper see <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/cornell.html>*

### **USDA Community Food Security Initiative**

This is a very large initiative run by the US Department of Agriculture. It includes a Community Food Production and Marketing strand which is helping schools to purchase directly from local farmers, a Nutrition Assistance Safety Net which is expanding participation in the Schools Meals and School Breakfast programs, and a Local Infrastructure and Policy Coordination program which includes a grant scheme to support local community food security projects.

*See [http://www.reeusda.gov/food\\_security/foodshp.htm](http://www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm) for more details.*

### **US Green Purchasing Website**

The Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC) has compiled information that will assist purchasers in their efforts to establish or maintain an environmental purchasing programme. Included is information identifying 'green' products, setting up programmes, and general and specific material available to purchasers.

*See <http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/envpurch.html>*



## Contacts

### Local and Regional UK Initiatives

#### **Belfast City Council**

Contact; Raymond Forbes, Procurement Manager, Development Department, Belfast City Council, The Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall St, Belfast, BT2 8BP. 02890 320 202 ext. 3622 or [forbesr@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:forbesr@belfastcity.gov.uk)

#### **Birmingham Food Links**

Contact; Richard Cave-Bigley, 0121 429 6364 or [rcavebigley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rcavebigley@yahoo.co.uk)

#### **Common Cause Cooperative Feasibility Study**

Contact; Topsy Jewel, Common Cause Cooperative Ltd, 01273 473351 or [comcause@element.u-net.com](mailto:comcause@element.u-net.com) or see <http://www.commoncause.co.uk>

#### **Cornwall Healthcare Trust Food Manufacturing Study**

Contact; Nathan Harrow, Food Study Officer, 01872 25 2767 or [nathan.harrow@rcht.swest.nhs.uk](mailto:nathan.harrow@rcht.swest.nhs.uk)

#### **Cornish Schools**

Contact; Jayne Jago, Commercial Manager (Catering Service), Cornwall County Council, County Hall, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY. 01872 323178 or [jjago@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:jjago@cornwall.gov.uk)

#### **East Anglian Schools Fruit Scheme**

Contact; Clive Peckham, Coordinator, East Anglia Food Link, 49a High St, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6AB. 01953 889 200 or [eafl@gn.apc.org](mailto:eafl@gn.apc.org)

#### **Harrogate Borough Council**

Contact; Economic Development Unit, 01423 556077 or [ed06@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:ed06@harrogate.gov.uk)

#### **Llanidloes Hospital and Llandrindod High School, Powys**

Contact; Richard Pitts, Powys Food Links, 01597 827573 or [richardp@powys.gov.uk](mailto:richardp@powys.gov.uk)

#### **Mapledene Early Years Centre, Hackney, London**

Contact; Mapledene Early Years Centre, Hackney, London. Fax No; 020 7254 4341

#### **Norfolk County Services**

Contact; Chris Cope, Norfolk County Services, 01603 222586 or [chris.cope.ncs@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.cope.ncs@norfolk.gov.uk)

#### **Somerset Schools**

Contact; Paul Sander-Jackson, Somerset Food Links, c/o Somerset District Council, Old Kelways, Somerton Rd, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9YE. 01458 257 439 or [paul.sanderjackson@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:paul.sanderjackson@southsomerset.gov.uk)

#### **South Gloucestershire Schools**

Contact; Kay Knight, 01454 868686 or [k\\_knight@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:k_knight@southglos.gov.uk)

#### **St Peter's Primary School, East Bridgeford, Nottinghamshire**

Contact; Jeanette Orrey, Catering Manager, St Peter's Primary School, Kneeton Rd, East Bridgeford, NG13 8PG. 01949 21182

#### **Sutton Borough Council**

Contact; Jim Glass, Procurement Policy, [jim.glass@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:jim.glass@sutton.gov.uk)

### UK-wide Initiatives

#### **Catering for Health Guide**

Contact; Robert Rees, Food Standards Agency, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH.

#### **Eat the View**

Contact; James Marwick [james.markwick@countryside.gov.uk](mailto:james.markwick@countryside.gov.uk), also various regional offices, see <http://www.eat-the-view.org.uk>

## **FLAIR**

Contact; Charles Couzens, f3, 0845 458 9525 or [charles.couzens@localfood.org.uk](mailto:charles.couzens@localfood.org.uk)

## **FSA/LGA Policy Group**

Contact; Tom Murray, FSA Head of Nutrition Division, 020 7276 8980 or [tom.murray@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tom.murray@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Local Food Works**

Contact; Local Food Works, Soil Association, Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY. 0117-9142425

## **Public Procurement in Local Agri-food Chains**

Contact; Kevin Morgan, [MorganKJ@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:MorganKJ@Cardiff.ac.uk)

## **DEFRA Public Procurement Working Group**

Contact; Roger Hinds, Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, [roger.hinds@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roger.hinds@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Sustainable Food Procurement in the NHS**

Contact; Angela Towers, [A.Towers@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:A.Towers@livjm.ac.uk) Public Health Sector, Liverpool University. Also see <http://www.sd-commission.gov.uk> or see <http://www.sd-commission.gov.uk/pubs/fp/index.htm> for a summary

## **Sustainable Food Chains**

Contact Vicki Hird ([vh@sustainweb.org](mailto:vh@sustainweb.org)) or James Petts ([james@sustainweb.org](mailto:james@sustainweb.org)), Sustain, 94 White Lion St, London, N1 9PF. 020 7837 1228

## **European and International initiatives and support projects**

### **Austria**

See [http://www.klip.wien.at/english/verwaltung/vw\\_lebensmittel.htm](http://www.klip.wien.at/english/verwaltung/vw_lebensmittel.htm) (English Version)

### **Denmark**

See <http://www.ski.dk/english> (English)

### **France**

Contact CIVAM on 00 33 4667 74783 or [civam.lr@wanadoo.fr](mailto:civam.lr@wanadoo.fr) or see <http://www.civam.org/mouvement/index/> (French)

### **Italy**

Contact the Italian Association for Organic Agriculture, 00 39 06863 29403 or <http://www.aiab.it> (Italian)

### **Japan**

See <http://www.wnn.or.jp/wnn-eco/gpne/index.html> (English)

### **Sweden**

See [http://www.hallbarasverige.gov.se/eng/vagar\\_till/upphandling/upphandling.htm](http://www.hallbarasverige.gov.se/eng/vagar_till/upphandling/upphandling.htm) (English)

### **United States of America**

Food Security Coalition [http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm\\_to\\_school.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html)

Iowa projects' paper see <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/cornell.html>

Department of Agriculture [http://www.reeusda.gov/food\\_security/foodshp.htm](http://www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm)

Green Purchasing Website <http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/envpurch.html>