

Recipe for a Greener Curry

How London's ethnic business can celebrate sustainable food



Like a Beacon

In London
every now and then
I get this craving
for my mother's food
I leave art galleries
in search of plantains
saltfish/sweet potatoes

I need this link

I need this touch
of home
swinging my bag
like a beacon
against the cold

Grace Nichols
The Fat Black Woman's Poems
Trafalgar Square, 1984



Visiting suppliers
in the 1930s
arcades of
Brixton market

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celebrate sustainable food

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The mounting public and media interest in sustainability over recent years should tell us that green values are here to stay. They are becoming central to businesses in the mainstream and specialist food sectors. Food producers and retailers are conscious of the demands of ethical customers interested in high quality, healthy and sustainable food. Shoppers are becoming more interested in where their food comes from, who grows it, how it is produced and what this means for growers and communities around the world.

We should meet this challenge with enthusiasm, because it marks a new wave of opportunities for entrepreneurship in both food production and retail. At Noon Products, we have shown that creating new products to meet Britain's love of ethnic foods can be both imaginative and innovative, and that environmental values can lie at the heart of this process.

Indeed, there is a remarkably high degree of entrepreneurship in the ethnic food sector, meeting the needs of London's diverse ethnic population. Respect for fellow citizens and the environment are core values for many of the UK's diverse cultures, so the time is now

ripe for ethnic food businesses to benefit from the rapid rise in consumer demand for ethical and environmentally friendly produce. London's ethnic entrepreneurs also make a vital contribution to wealth creation, job creation and positive images of diversity - often ploughing money and training back into some of the least wealthy communities in the UK.

This report, *Recipe for a Greener Curry*, published by London Food Link, is a welcome contribution to the understanding of how ethnic food businesses can embrace the growing market for sustainable food. It also examines how London's ethnic food businesses, with the appropriate support, can contribute to a vibrant, profitable, diverse and sustainable food sector for years to come.

Sir Gulam Noon MBE
Chairman of Noon Products



Good food is central to the lives of London's ethnic communities. Whole areas of London are now defined by the trade and consumption of food eaten by a specific community: Sylheti and Bengali curries in Banglatown; regional cuisine from provinces such as Guangdong and Sichuan in Chinatown; Panjabi delicacies from the region's Sikh, Hindu and Muslim communities in Southall; West African exotics in Peckham; eastern Mediterranean food from communities on the Edgware Road - the list goes on and on. These communities know the importance of gathering around family meals, cooking from scratch and are definitely fussy about quality, authenticity and freshness.

This report celebrates the many diverse and distinctive food products, from small, ethnic owned enterprises, that meet the demands of both specialised and mainstream markets. Most of these enterprises operate in localised supply chains, returning money and skills to their local community: trading with local businesses, employing members of local communities or sponsoring charitable initiatives. Significantly, these enterprises often return money and expertise "back home," through trade with food businesses in developing countries. While this trade might incur "food miles" (rivalling those of Londoners driving to the shops) the contribution to social and economic development of developing countries must also be recognised.

The fact that London's food system has a significant environmental impact is now beyond doubt. In economic terms, the food industry employs nearly half a million people. In manufacturing, food is London's biggest sector. If we want small, ethnic producers serving up sustainable food, policy makers have to value this innovative and dynamic sector and provide practical support, such as that offered by London Food Link's

Greener Curry project. Moreover, small scale food producers in developing countries often subsist by farming small plots of lands using traditional methods without artificial chemicals. These methods are more naturally linked with the concepts of sustainability. But, for these producers, sustainable certification and labelling is an expensive process, incurring additional costs and making them less competitive. We must ensure that investment in agriculture in the developing world allows small scale producers to form cooperatives able to monitor sustainable practice and take advantage of the market for sustainable food.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to reflect on what London's ethnic food manufacturers can do to serve up sustainable food, tell stories about the good work that is being done and highlight to policy makers that it's important to work with ethnic business if we really want to support a more equitable and sustainable food system.

Murad Qureshi AM

London Assembly member
Deputy Chair of the
Environment Committee

Summary

It has become a modern cliché to say that 'green' is the new black. Sustainability is, at last, fashionable and the UK market for ethical food - for example organic, fair trade and local - has now reached at least £2 billion. This report explores how much "black" has embraced "green".

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) businesses make a major contribution to the cultural vibrancy of British food, with the market for "ethnic" food generating some £1.29 billion in 2004, and still rising. Yet this London Food Link (LFL) report shows that many of these businesses - as in the rest of the food sector - have not yet grasped the market opportunities presented by our growing appetite for sustainable food.

In this under-researched area, LFL did face-to-face and telephone interviews with BAME owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the food sector - from farmers to caterers - and also approached people at a range of public and trade events. We now have a vivid snapshot of:

- the potential for integrating more sustainable food into culturally distinctive businesses;
- the barriers that might be inhibiting these positive developments; and
- what more could be done to speed up sustainability in this part of the food industry.

Problems we found included:

- Lack of knowledge about, and skills for implementing, sustainable business practices - including widespread confusion about the term 'sustainability';
- Higher costs of sustainable food, and lack of money to invest in change, particularly among small companies in a highly competitive market;
- Inappropriate help available, with business support agencies rarely offering practical support to change to more sustainable food ingredients;
- Few suppliers of suitable sustainable food, leaving potential buyers concerned about inconsistent deliveries or uncertain quality;
- Inadequate supply infrastructure, with some businesses tied to family or cultural supply chains, but infrastructure for sustainable food not yet fully developed; and
- Uncertain demand for "greener" curry, and some businesses not yet convinced that their customers will pay more for higher quality, sustainable food.

At the same time, there are plenty of opportunities, many of which have been grasped by the 14 case studies detailed in the report:

- Small is beautiful - small, independent businesses, with detailed knowledge of their market, can move rapidly to meet changing customer demands;
- Some specialist infrastructure still exists - though much has been swept away by supermarkets, some specialist "ethnic" infrastructure is proving robust;
- Some practical support is already available - both national and London government agencies offer a range of "green" services for businesses; and
- Sustainability is already part of many cultures that are defined by adherence to religious practices. All of the world's 11 major religions explicitly support respect and care for the natural world, making them arguably the world's first environmentalists.

To help build on these positive elements and overcome the barriers, London Food Link recommends that Government should:

- Give a higher profile - and more money - to its programme to meet growing demand for sustainable food in the public sector - through its Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative. In particular, it needs to be easier for SMEs - including those run by BAME groups - to be able to bid for contracts;
- Stimulate demand in black and ethnic minority communities by, for example, funding BAME groups to develop appropriate "green" marketing that resonates with specific communities;
- Stimulate demand in the market in general. London still does not yet have its own regional food group. A sustainable "local to London" brand could help business meet growing demand from tourists as well as residents;
- Invest in infrastructure, such as logistics, marketing, and streamlined certification systems as well as physical infrastructure such as abattoirs, distribution hubs and sustainable transport; and
- Support sustainable food suppliers by providing tailored business support. Such specialists could advise on:
 - access to, for example, low-cost capital for investment, market research and product development expertise, specialist training, marketing and promotional skills, and networking opportunities; and
 - saving money and protecting the environment by, for example, reducing the costs of energy, water and waste disposal. Help to form co-operative buying groups could also reduce the costs of buying sustainable food ingredients for small businesses.

As well as motivating Government action, LFL hopes this report not only gives well-deserved publicity to the current "green" entrepreneurs in the BAME food sector, but also inspires others to build on their achievements and find new and exciting ways of bringing culturally distinctive, delicious and sustainable food to our plates.



Breadfruit and yams for sale
at an Iraqi owned store,
Brixton market

1. Introduction

Why produce this report?

The Greener Curry project aims to increase the proportion of local, organic and fair-trade food produced and consumed by London's diverse ethnic communities. The focus is the ethnic-owned food sector - food growers, processors, manufacturers, restaurants and catering services - because we are concerned that they are missing out on the burgeoning market for sustainable food (see section 2). Once we began to explore this issue, we soon realised that there is very little research either into the views about and practices of ethnic-owned businesses on sustainable food¹ or, indeed, on how London's black, Asian and minority ethnic communities regard the issues around sustainable food.² Moreover, little appears to have been done in mainstream marketing to promote sustainable food beyond its main market of affluent, predominantly white communities.

This report aims to help fill those gaps in research, point to where more research needs to be done, and - most important for this project - use the information and contacts generated by the report as the basis for a programme of action.

Sustain's London Food Link project

London Food Link runs a network of organisations and individuals with members as diverse as farmers, food writers, restaurant owners, independent food retailers, food producers, caterers and community food projects. Both London Food Link and its members run projects that help to:

- increase the availability of sustainable food in London
- tackle the barriers preventing access to healthy and sustainable food for all Londoners
- celebrate and protect London's diverse food culture

London Food Link is a project of Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, a not-for-profit organisation. Sustain 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. Our experience in promoting sustainable food has shown that the food and drink sector needs specialist support to be able to take action to help create a sustainable local food economy.

1 Personal communication with Vernon Barrett, Head of Knowledge Centre on Black and Minority Ethnic Businesses, Business Link for London, 2005.

2 Ian Worthington, Monder Ram, and Trevor Jones, "Giving Something Back - Social Responsibility and South Asian Businesses in the United Kingdom: An Exploratory Study" (Centre for Social Markets, October 2003).

Mother and son of this Maltese family run the fish stall



2. Why ‘green’, why ‘curry’?

‘Green’

Being ‘green’ is the common shorthand to describe goods or services that make, or claim to make, a positive contribution to sustainability. When people use this shorthand, they are often referring to something that is good for the environment, but sustainability is a much broader concept than that.

What we mean by sustainable food and farming, and why it is important

We do not believe that anyone has improved on the definition of sustainability developed almost 20 years ago by Gro Harlem Brundtland³; "the capacity to provide for the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability to provide adequately for future generations". We understand a sustainable food system to be one which enhances the health and welfare of people and animals, improves the working and living environment, enriches society and culture and promotes equity. A sustainable food and farming system would include elements explained under the following headings.

Food produced using minimum amounts of pesticides, artificial fertilisers and energy

Some farming systems, including organic, biodynamic and those using Integrated Pest Management, avoid using pesticides. Organic farmers also avoid artificial fertilisers and try to reduce the amount of energy they use. Organically grown crops, mainly as a result of not using inorganic fertilisers, require 50% less energy input per unit area than conventionally grown crops, and organic dairy cows have been found to account for five times less energy use than conventionally reared cows.⁴ It is also acknowledged by government that organic farming systems encourage greater biodiversity than conventional farms.⁵

3 World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

4 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "An Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of Organic Farming" ed. Defra (Defra, 2003).

5 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "An Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of Organic Farming" ed. Defra (Defra, 2003).

Local food

Local food is consumed as close to the point of production and processing as possible. It may be from a mile down the road, it may be from within the region or it may be from the UK. Local food tends to be more sustainable because, with reduced transportation, it produces less carbon dioxide emissions and other damage associated with traffic.⁶ Buying local food also supports local jobs and livelihoods. Studies have shown⁷ that every £10 spent with a local food business, for example an organic box scheme, generates £25 for the local area, compared to only £14 for every £10 spent in a non-local food business, such as a supermarket.

Fair trade

Products carrying the Fairtrade mark have been certified by the Fairtrade Foundation to prove that the producers and farmers in poor countries get a fair price for their products. They receive a minimum price that covers the cost of sustainable production and an extra premium that is invested in social or economic development projects.⁸ There is also an increasing range of products that, although they do not carry the Fairtrade mark, incorporate fair trade principles in one or more respects.⁹

Seasonal produce

Buying produce in season has a number of advantages for sustainability, as it is more likely to be locally produced (see above), and is also likely to be cheaper. Many food experts also say that food eaten at the peak of the season is at its best, in terms of taste and overall quality. See box "The value of seasonal food" on page 80 for information about seasonality.

6 Paul Watkiss, "The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development," (Defra, July 2005).

7 Bernard Ward and Julie Lewis, "Plugging the Leaks: Making the Most of Every Pound that Enters Your Local Economy," (New Economics Foundation, 2002).

8 Fairtrade Foundation, "The Five Guarantees Behind the Fairtrade Mark," (Fairtrade Foundation). Website viewed on 18 August 2006. www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/five_guarantees.pdf

9 For example, London's Monmouth Coffee Company buys and roasts coffee from single farms, estates and cooperatives around the coffee-growing world. They trade to their own ethical criteria, but are not licensed to use the Fairtrade mark. www.monmouthcoffee.co.uk

10 Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, "Twenty-Fifth Report - Turning the Tide: Addressing the Impact of Fisheries on the Marine Environment" (December 2004).

11 Marine Stewardship Council, "Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing," (MSC, 2002). www.msc.org

12 See the Marine Conservation Society 'Fish Online' website at: www.fishonline.org, with lists of 'species to avoid' (www.fishonline.org/advice/avoid/) and 'species to eat' (www.fishonline.org/advice/eat/)

13 Stephen Khan, "Salmon Farms Urged to Rear Organic Fish," *The Guardian* (January 18, 2004).

Fish from sustainable sources

As the crisis in global fish stocks intensifies¹⁰ increasing attention is at last being paid to finding fish from sustainable sources. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)¹¹ runs an assurance scheme under which fish are guaranteed to come from fisheries with an independently verified sustainability policy, where stocks are not depleted and unsustainable fishing methods are not used. The Marine Conservation Society publishes lists of 'fish to eat' and 'fish to avoid' on its 'fishonline' website,¹² highlighting the fish species that are most at risk of extinction, and which are still safe to eat. For farmed fish, the only sustainability certification is organic, although there is ongoing debate about whether it is appropriate to certify fish farms, especially those growing carnivorous fish such as salmon.^{13 14 15}

Truly Sustainable Fish

UK farmers could be raising herbivorous, organic fish to meet the demands of not only those who care about over-fishing, but also London communities, such as Afro-Caribbean and African, who have a culture of farming and eating tilapia. Researchers at Stirling University's Institute of Aquaculture are developing an environmentally sustainable production method for farming tilapia in rural areas.

Tilapia is a family of small fish that originated in Africa, traditionally farmed for subsistence. Tilapia can be fed an herbivorous diet, so there is no need for expensive and highly unsustainable feed made from processed fish or meat. Tilapia is also hardy, adaptable and grows fast in warm water.

Tilapia's white flesh is firm, mild in taste and a good substitute for white fish. Some of the most popular



white fish in
the UK - like

Atlantic cod and haddock - are being fished to near extinction. Sustain's recent report *Like Shooting Fish in a Barrel*¹⁶ summarises the environmental damage caused by both industrial scale sea-fishing and fish farming. Farming tilapia has the potential to be a more sustainable source of fish, causing much less environmental damage.

Farming also means that there is a consistent supply of tilapia year round. The project is looking at potential markets for farmed tilapia, including ethnic communities, ethical consumers and gastro-pub chefs searching for distinctive, sustainable fish.¹⁷

14 Soil Association, *Fish Farming and Organic Standards* (Soil Association, November 2005); available from www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/librarytitles/19426.HTML.

15 For more information see <http://www.puresalmon.co.uk>

16 Benjamin Wielgosz, "Like Shooting Fish in a Barrel" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, August 2005)

17 Zeenat Anjari, "Truly Sustainable Fish" *The Jelled Eel*, (Sustain, Summer 2006). www.aqua.stir.uk/Systems/TilapiaProject.htm

High animal welfare standards

Organic certification ensures that high animal welfare standards are integrated into organic farms.¹⁸ Other examples of animal welfare standards that are higher than the legal minimum include Freedom Foods¹⁹ (certified by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or 'RSPCA') and free range eggs. These standards aim to produce meat, eggs and dairy products that not only avoid cruelty to animals and respect the natural habits of particular species, but also produce higher quality food.

Healthy food

Healthy food is good quality, tasty and nutritious. In general, nutritious food is rich in micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals, contains plenty of fibre and provides the right balance of essential fats. So a healthy diet includes a variety of whole-grain cereals and other starchy staples, plentiful and varied vegetables and fruit, diverse nuts, seeds and pulses, some dairy produce and, for non-vegetarians, occasional fish and meat. A healthy diet should also be free from harmful additives, whether intentionally added, or as accidental residues, and should not be produced using risky processes, such as genetic modification.

This report sets out the full range of sustainability concerns but in our talks with food business owners, it became clear that the environment, social justice and plain old saving money were of more importance.²⁰ As a result, much of the advice and many of the case studies offered in this report do not focus on health concerns. We may return to these issues as the project develops.

The growing market for sustainable food

There is a growing interest among consumers about foods grown and prepared with sustainability in mind. A 2001 MORI poll commissioned by Business in the Environment²¹ suggests that over 40% of UK consumers choose one product over another because of its environmentally friendly packaging, formulation or advertising.

18 Charlie Pye-Smith, "Batteries Not Included - Organic Farming and Animal Welfare" (Soil Association, 2003).

19 Freedom Food is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) welfare-focused farm assurance and food labelling scheme. See: www.freedomfoods.org.uk

20 The National Centre for Business and Sustainability, "Encouraging Sustainability Amongst Small Businesses" (Defra, 2006).

21 MORI, "Business and the Environment Survey" (MORI and Business in the Environment, 2001).

In October 2006, the market research specialist Mintel declared that 'Green is the new black', reporting that British people are spending over £2 billion on "ethical foods", up 62% since 2002. The ethical criteria considered by Mintel included organic, Fairtrade, locally grown food supplied through farmers' markets, free-range eggs and certified Freedom Foods (a label denoting animal welfare standards).²² The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) has also reported that 65% of shoppers now claim to buy some local food (and most of these would like to buy more), and a further 9% expressed an interest in buying local food if availability was better.²³ Although questions remain about whether customers can easily turn this inclination into action when shopping, and whether they would apply the same preferences to processed foods, the IGD's report *Retail and Foodservice Opportunities for Local Food* concludes that a significant opportunity is being missed by many food companies.

The Soil Association reports that in the market for organic food, sales have grown much faster than for non-organic, reaching £1.2 billion - an 11% increase on the previous year. Organic food currently accounts for about 2% of all food sales.²⁴

Some market analysts also consider that, for the ethnic food market, the key determinant of which products will be successful is how they capitalise on some of the trends driving consumer behaviour, such as authenticity, value-added, and health.²⁵

In addition to consumers, a growing number of large organisations in both the business and public sectors are now including environmental and other corporate responsibility factors in their tender requirements. The importance of the adoption of corporate social responsibility practices by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was highlighted by a recent MORI survey of UK small businesses. It found that, in the preceding 12 months, 60% of SMEs had been asked by big business customers about their safety policies and practices, 43% had been asked about environmental policies and practices, and 17% about social and community issues. Increasingly, large organisations not only specify requirements and check for compliance, they also explain to suppliers why these issues are important and how it can be commercially advantageous to meet higher environmental and social standards.²⁶

22 Mintel news release, 13th October 2006: "*Green is the new black* as Brits turn to ethical food"

23 Geraldine Padbury, "Retail and Foodservice Opportunities for Local Food" (Institute of Grocery Distribution, 2006).

24 Soil Association, "Organic Market Report" (Soil Association, 2005).

25 Datamonitor, "Insights into Tomorrow's Ethnic Food & Drink Consumers" (Datamonitor, August 2005).

26 Business in the Community, "Business in the Environment Quarterly Brief" (Business in the Community, January 2006). www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=2924

Government policies to support sustainable food and farming

There is increasing pressure on businesses in all sectors to improve their environmental performance, driven by growing customer pressure (see above), changing legislation and rising waste disposal and energy costs (see below).

In 2001 Government convened a Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, chaired by Sir Don Curry. The report from this Commission, now known as the *Curry report*,²⁷ emphasised the close inter-relationships between the environment, health and social issues, and the economy, and called for a profound shift in the food and farming system in which food producers reconnect with food consumers. The *Curry report* was widely acclaimed and formed the basis of the government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in England.²⁸ This Strategy has stimulated, and has links to, a wide range of government policy initiatives (some of which are covered below), all designed to reduce the damage caused by our farming and food system to the environment, health and the economy, and to promote more sustainable practices.

Defra's Organic Action Plan,²⁹ for example, is promoting the organic farming sector in England by encouraging UK producers to supply a greater proportion of the organic primary produce consumed domestically. They currently supply around 44% of the market, an increase from 30% in 2002. The objective for the UK organic market share is to increase that to at least 70% by 2010.³⁰

The most recent initiative is the Food Industry Sustainability Strategy,³¹ which has issued challenges to the food and drink industry to meet a wide range of sustainability indicators, including to:

- Reduce carbon emissions by 20% by 2010;
- Reduce waste by 15-20% by 2010;
- Reduce water use by 10-15% by 2020, and by 20-25% in the South East;
- Reduce the external costs (e.g., damage to health and the environment, and costs of mitigation) associated with domestic food transport by, for example, 20% by 2012;

27 The Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, "Farming and Food, a Sustainable Future" ed. The Cabinet Office (The Cabinet Office, 2002). <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/farming/index/commissionreport.htm>

28 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food - Facing the Future" ed. Defra (Defra, 2002). www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/newstrategy/index.htm

29 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "Organic Action Plan" ed. Defra (Defra, 2003). www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/actionplan/actionplan.htm

30 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "Action Plan to develop organic food and farming in England. Two years on" ed. Defra (Defra, 2004).

31 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, "Food Industry Sustainability Strategy" ed. Defra (Defra, 2006). www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/fiss/index.htm

- Halve the rate of under-representation of women and ethnic minorities in skilled, administrative and managerial grades, by 2010;
- Cut deaths and serious injuries in the sector by 10% by 2010;
- Reduce by 40% the number of adult workers who lack qualifications at NVQ level 2 and above by 2010; and
- Promote ethical trading, including through an Ethical Trading Forum.

Closer to home is the Mayor's London Food Strategy³², launched in May 2006, which calls on the public, voluntary and private sectors in London to work together to improve the sustainability of London's food and farming system. The strategy has identified six key priority areas which offer the best opportunities for initiating and/or accelerating change towards a healthy, sustainable and equitable food system. The priority areas are:

- ensuring commercial vibrancy;
- securing consumer engagement;
- leveraging the power of procurement;
- developing regional links;
- delivering healthy schools; and
- reducing food-related waste and litter.

Despite this raft of government initiatives, many SMEs still have low awareness of their environmental obligations and are failing to take the sustained action needed to reduce their environmental impact.³³ This lack of awareness is not restricted to businesses owned by diverse and ethnic communities, but does include them, so part of the aim of this report is to tackle this lack of knowledge, and help such businesses take advantage of the help - including financial help - that is available to them to meet these and other sustainability targets.

32 London Food, "Healthy and Sustainable Food for London" (London: London Development Agency, May 2006).

33 Environment Agency, "SME Environment Survey UK" (Environment Agency, 2005).

Imran Patel, M & R Superfresh,
New Spitalfields Market



‘Curry’

Since Sake Deen Mahomed opened the Hindoostanee Coffee House in 1810 at 34 George Street, London,³⁴ curry has become as English as the full English breakfast. In a speech given in 2001 at the Social Market Foundation to celebrate Britishness, the late Robin Cook recognised that "chicken tikka masala is now a true British national dish".³⁵

"Curry" therefore seemed an appropriately familiar shorthand for the wide range of cuisines considered by this report. In addition, all types of curry - including, now, speciality curries from Thailand - are now fully part and parcel of our western lives.

Curry is, in fact, a term the British learned from Portuguese merchants, used to describe an unfamiliar set of Indian stews based on ingredients, such as chillies, first brought to India in the 15th century by Portuguese explorers. It is a term that perfectly illustrates how not only Britain absorbs and adapts external influences, but Indian cuisine itself is constantly in the process of assimilation and revision based on cultural exchange with explorers, conquerors and communities hosting migrant populations. Indian food has spread around the world, from Britain's curry houses to the railway stands of Tokyo, where *karee raisu* (curry rice) is a favorite Japanese comfort food.³⁶

Once an incredibly exotic dish, "curry" can also symbolise how new ideas can become mainstream, which is what we hope will happen with sustainability and routine business practice.

What we mean by ethnic food

Ethnic, or culturally distinctive, food is food produced or eaten by London's minority ethnic groups and this project uses the following London Development Agency definition. Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, refer to those in Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese and other ethnic groups.³⁷ For the purpose of this project, a BAME-owned business is one where the majority of the owners (above 50%) belong to an ethnic minority.

34 Michael H. Fisher, "Mahomed, Deen (1759-1851)" (Oxford University Press, 2004).

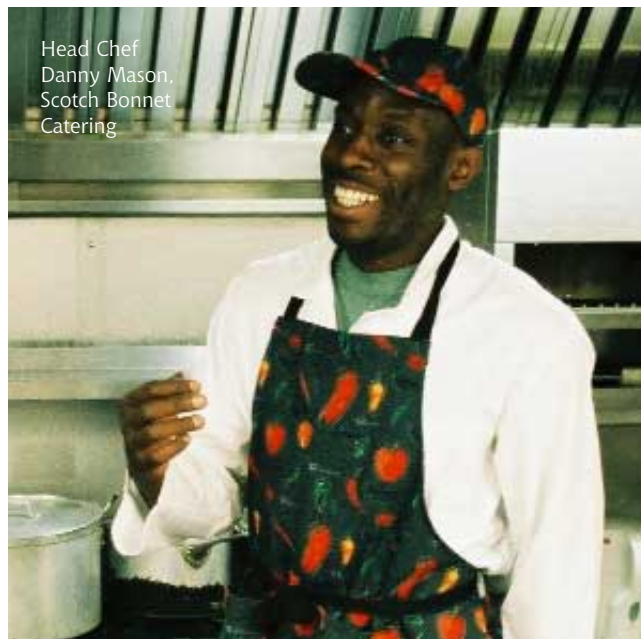
35 Robin Cook, "Robin Cook's Chicken Tikka Masala Speech" in The Guardian (April 19th, 2001).

36 Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2006).

37 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-Owned Businesses" (LDA, March 2005).



Chef Norma,
Scotch Bonnet
Catering



Head Chef
Danny Mason,
Scotch Bonnet
Catering

There has been some debate about whether the culturally- and religiously- specific food needs of BAME communities can be properly met by the production and supply of sustainable food.^{38 39} For example, one aspect of sustainability is the extent to which food is produced close to the point of consumption, and this is not an option in the UK for the tropical products that some communities prefer. However, the white community also consumes considerable quantities of exotic fruit and vegetables so this is not specifically a cultural debate.

Ethnic food, as defined by market researchers Key Note,⁴⁰ is divided into the main sectors of ethnic foods and rice. Ethnic foods are categorised by the countries from which they originate: Indian, Chinese, Mexican and Tex Mex, Thai, Caribbean and Other. The ethnic sector includes cook-in sauces, ready prepared meals, snacks and accompaniments. The rice sector covers all commercial varieties including Basmati and fragrant Thai.

38 Malini Mehra, "Food Miles: Should We Be Buying Food from Abroad?" in *UK Rural Economy and Land Use Debates* (Royal Academy of Engineering, 2006).

39 Paul Watkiss, "The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development" (Department of Food and Rural Affairs, July 2005).

40 Key Note, "Ethnic Foods: Market Report Plus" (Key Note Publications Ltd, 2005).

The importance of ethnic food

For black and ethnic minority communities

In London, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population in 2001 made up just under one-third (28%) of the overall population;⁴¹ other studies confirm that one in three Londoners is from an ethnic background.⁴² Immigrant communities and subsequent generations often communicate a need for a cultural connection to 'back home' ⁴³ and this is very often expressed in food. In addition, the UK is home to Europe's highest spending Muslim community. It is a major market with a Muslim population estimated at 1.9 million consumers, and growing, and an estimated market size of £700m for halal products to be eaten in and out of the home.⁴⁴

Evidence on supply chain structures in ethnic food businesses is limited but supplies and services in traditional sectors remain predominantly within the community.⁴⁵ For example, for East Asian businesses (especially Chinese) many of the basic food supplies for restaurants and retailers can only be obtained from dedicated wholesale businesses. Relationships with suppliers are based on trust, often involving family relationships, friendships or loyalty due to assistance given at the early stages of a business's life.⁴⁶

Of course, people from BAME communities do not eat only culturally specific food, and few businesses see trade within the community alone to be enough for long-term growth.⁴⁷ Fortunately, the white population also has a large and growing appetite for "ethnic" food.

For everyone

In 2004 the UK ethnic food market had a retail value of £1.29 billion.⁴⁸ Between 1998 and 2002 the market saw growth of 44.1%, attributed both to the major ethnic food brands offering ready meals for "cash-rich and time-poor" consumers and to smaller companies, working at a lower level of production, serving the demands of ethnic communities, experienced travellers and adventurous consumers. Non-ethnic community consumers, inexperienced in cooking specific ethnic cuisines, often prefer premium products, such as cook-in sauces or

41 London Development Agency, "Diversity Works for London" (LDA, March 2005).

42 Office for National Statistics, "Focus on Ethnicity & Identity" in *Focus on Census 2001* (ONS, 2004).

43 Gerd Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Ethnicity and Community in West London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

44 Mintel Group, "Halal Foods: UK Market Intelligence Food and Drink" (Mintel, January 2002).

45 Monder Ram and T Jones, "Ethnic Minorities in Business" (Small Business Research Trust, 1998).

46 ABi Associates, "Supply Chain Stories" Black and Minority Ethnic Business Knowledge Centre, (ABi Associates, 2004)

47 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-Owned Businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

48 Knowledge Centres, "Black and Minority Ethnic Businesses" www.knowledgecentres.com/BME/ viewed on 23 September 2005

spice mixes, over basic ingredients. Trends towards healthy eating and vegetarian food have also benefited the market.⁴⁹ Some market analysts consider that, for the ethnic food market, the key determinant of which products will be successful is how they capitalise on some of the trends driving consumer behaviour, such as authenticity, value-added and health.⁵⁰

However, rate of sales growth slowed considerably between 2000 and 2004. In 2001 the market grew by 10.7%, while growth slowed to 3.2% in 2004. This slowdown indicates that the market is reaching maturity and consumer interest in the dominant Indian and Chinese cuisines is beginning to fade, especially since many Indian and Chinese dishes are now considered staples.⁵¹ Key Note's latest report on ethnic foods forecasts that sales of organic and lower fat dishes, as well as premium regional dishes, are likely to rise strongly. In 2005, Waitrose launched premium ranges of regional and organic Indian dishes. Half the chilled ready meals in Sainsbury's are ethnic, and the company commented that it sees a lot of potential in organic and low fat ethnic foods. Multiples are also targeting the Asian trade, with Tesco appointing a dedicated Asian foods buyer in 2003 and offering clearly signed ethnic sections in certain stores.⁵²

Clearly, the ethnic foods market is highly competitive; small and medium-sized enterprises such as food processors and manufacturers must innovate continuously to compete with large companies that can invest more in marketing, research and development and state-of-the-art machinery to meet stringent manufacturing regulations. Many BAME-owned businesses, particularly those operating in ethnic community markets, have not yet been able to create the competitive advantage necessary for higher margins, increased profitability and the opportunity to invest for growth.⁵³ Amongst others, Noon Products is a high profile exception to these limits (see box).

Major multiples' percentage share of UK ethnic food sales by value

Multiple	% Share of ethnic foods market
Tesco	30
Asda	20
Sainsbury's	17.5
Morrisson's	15
Co-op	5
Waitrose	4
Other	8.5

Source: Key Note, 2005

49 Key Note, "Ethnic Foods: Market Report Plus" (Key Note Publications Ltd, August 2003).

50 Datamonitor, "Insights into Tomorrow's Ethnic Food & Drink Consumers" (Datamonitor, August 2005).

51 Key Note, "Ethnic Foods: Market Report Plus" (Key Note Publications Ltd, 2005).

52 Key Note, "Ethnic Foods: Market Report Plus" (Key Note Publications Ltd, 2005).

53 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-Owned Businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

Noon Products Ltd: A growing success story

Noon Products has three factories based in Southall, West London, covering an area of 250,000 square feet, and all featuring modern, highly efficient manufacturing lines. Noon is now the biggest supplier of cooked and frozen Indian food to British supermarkets, under retailers' own brands and Noon's own, premium brands.

Sir Gulam Noon is Chairman of Noon Products and the man credited with bringing authentic Indian food to the supermarkets. He began his career aged 17 in Bombay, managing the family business, Royal Sweets. In the 1960s, Sir Gulam came to Britain and set up Bombay Halwa, a small sweet shop in Southall which grew with London's Asian population. The ready-made curry company was launched in 1989.

Noon Products recognises the importance of the environment and attempts to ensure that "the environmental impact of our activities is kept to a practicable minimum". The company's Environmental Policy, published on the company website,⁵⁴ emphasises efficient use of energy, fuel and water and waste minimisation. An officer is responsible for the policy's implementation and its communication to staff. The policy states the company will incorporate environmental issues into business management systems and promote awareness of these issues to businesses that Noon works with. There is no commitment yet, however, to buying sustainable ingredients for their products.



Noon Products' team of chefs

Sir Gulam is recognised for his business acumen and services to the community. He received an MBE in 1966, a knighthood in 2002 and in 2004 won the Asian Business Award for Community Services. He is a trustee of numerous charities and Chairman of the Noon Foundation, which supports a wide range of causes locally in Ealing (especially in education and sports), throughout the UK and abroad.

According to Sir Gulam, the food business is "a business of imagination and innovation both ways - in terms of the production methods, and also in terms of the design of the recipes." Can sustainable food lead to innovation at Noon Products?

54 Noon Products, "Environmental Policy" <http://www.noon.co.uk/environmental.htm> viewed October 2006

55 British Library, *Asian Business, Arts and Media in Britain: Interviews with Asian Businessmen and Women* viewed on 5 July 2006. www.bl.uk/collections/business/abinterviews.html



Edward Johnston,
Port Royal Patties

Government policies to support small and medium-sized enterprises, and black and ethnic minority businesses

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), refer to those companies employing between 10 and 250 employees or those that have a turnover of less than 50 million Euros (or approximately £33.5 million). Micro businesses are those employing fewer than 10 people.⁵⁶

Around 25% of all London businesses sell food⁵⁷ and almost one in four businesses in London (22.6%) can be categorised as BAME-owned⁵⁸ with the majority of businesses small or micro in size.⁵⁹ These businesses employ 560,000 people, with most of these jobs in restaurants, retailing, personal services and small-scale manufacturing. Traditionally, BAME-owned enterprises have tended to be concentrated within their own communities and to focus on easily accessible markets and low-value products. Although these ethnic markets have growth limitations, the



Polish workers fuel
the growth of
London's food
businesses

56 The Commission of the European Communities, "Commission Recommendation Concerning the Definition of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises," in *Official Journal of the European Commission* (Brussels: EC, 2003). http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/consultations/sme_definition/index.htm

57 Mel Barrett and Dan Keech, "Capital Eats - an Analysis of London's Food Economy" (Sustain: the alliance for better food & farming, 2004).

58 Business Link for London, "London Annual Business Survey" (Business Link for London and the London Development Agency, 2004).

59 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-Owned Businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

knowledge of and easy access to their communities gives these businesses a distinctive market advantage. As a result, the following communities traditionally own businesses in the food and drink sector (in descending order of numbers of businesses):⁶⁰

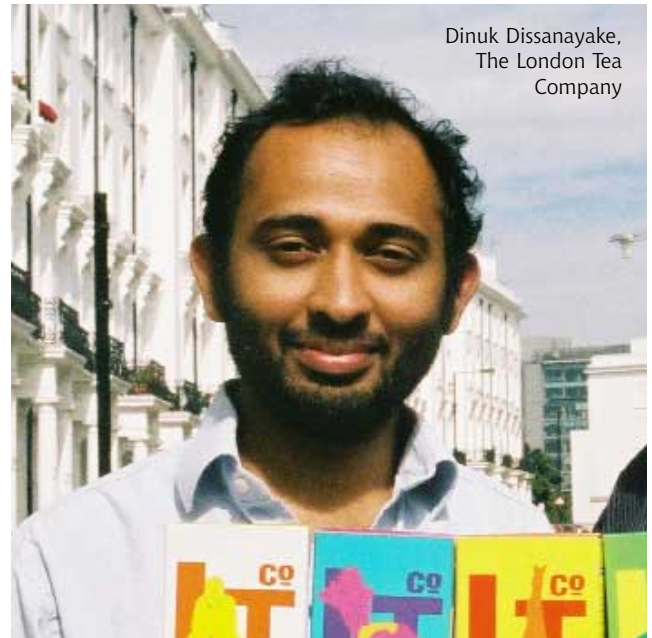
- South Asians - catering, retailing, manufacturing;
- East Asians - catering, import and export;
- African Caribbeans (Black) - catering, import;
- West Asians - catering.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of detailed data on the number of BAME-owned food businesses in London and at which stage of the supply chain they operate. These businesses have only recently been considered by policy makers for their important contribution to London's economy and are only now being seen as worthy of statistical study in their own right.

However, more research has been done on ethnic minorities in business in general, and the particular challenges they face.⁶¹ A consistent finding is the disinclination of first-generation owners to use local business support agencies, either because of lack of knowledge of what services are on offer, or scepticism that these services are relevant. To address these issues, the Ethnic Minority Business Forum (EMBF) was launched in July 2000 to advise government on the right help and advice ethnic minority businesses need for growth. The EMBF works with the Small Business Service and Business Link franchises to identify the needs of entrepreneurs from BAME communities (see Appendix II "Where to get more help").

60 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-owned businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

61 Monder Ram and David Smallbone, "Ethnic Minority Enterprise: Policy in Practice" (Small Business Service, June 2001).



Dinuk Dissanayake,
The London Tea
Company



Gazebo Fine Foods

To address these issues in London, Action Plans were published by the London Development Agency in May 2005. With its partners, the LDA uses the Plans to develop coherent business support strategies and programmes about the potential of ethnic-owned companies in terms of business start up, business growth and jobs.⁶²

The London BME Action Plan

The LDA commissioned research in 2002 to determine the current position and contribution (and consequently the business needs) of London's Black, Asian, Chinese and other minority-owned businesses to London's economy. Emerging evidence had indicated that the nature and position of these businesses was changing significantly but that this was not reflected in existing studies, business policy or business support provision. The resulting report⁶³ recognised that BAME-owned businesses had largely been excluded from research; improvement to services could not be imposed from the top-down, but had to start with research into what BAME-owners themselves needed.

The report also highlighted the fact that BAME-owned businesses encounter disproportionate barriers to the development and growth of their businesses in specific thematic areas. (It has been noted that similar barriers are also experienced by businesses offering green products and services.⁶⁴) To carry out the recommendations of the research, the LDA developed a series of six interconnecting and cross-cutting Action Plans focusing on the recommended themes within its research, namely:

1. Business support and advice;
2. International partnerships and international trade development;
3. Public and private sector contracts;
4. Business finance;
5. Business premises; and
6. Information, data and research.

Six think tanks were set up to identify, within their specific areas, barriers that may hinder the progress of BAME-owned businesses, such as culture and language. The think tanks endeavour to improve the flow of information from business support services.⁶⁵ The LDA is currently in the process of commissioning a review of the six BME Action Plans.

62 London Development Agency, "The London BME Action Plan" (LDA, May 2005).

63 London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-owned businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

64 South Bank University, "Green Seeds: New Environmental Markets for Small Business in London" (Merton: Merton Council, February 2001).

65 For more information, go to <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.984>



Chef Danny Mason with his meat supplier, Brixton market

3. What we did

Given the comparative lack of research into the views about and practices of ethnic-owned businesses on sustainable food, and of London's BAME communities, we used a combination of methods to try to get the best information we could, with the limited staff time available. This included combing through published material, and conducting interviews in a range of settings with individual businesses and those who serve them.

Literature search

The desk-based research used a range of existing data, including publicly available reports, and industry media. Search engines including Google, Small Business Research Portal and the British Library Integrated Catalogue were used with the following terms: minorities, ethnic, food, business, environment, sustainable, organic, fair trade and local. In addition, the British Library offers an Asian Business search mechanism that yields directories, market research, internet sources, trade magazines and newsletters on South Asian businesses specifically, and ethnic minority owned businesses in general.

The predominance of literature on South Asian businesses may be explained by their numbers; the London Annual Business Survey of 2004⁶⁶ shows South Asians to be the ethnic minority owning the largest volume of businesses in all sectors, with a combined sales turnover of £50 billion and employing around 300,000 people.

Another valuable source of information was research commissioned by the London Development Agency in 2002. This aimed to discover the changing business needs of London's ethnic-owned businesses and recommend how these needs could be reflected in business policy and business support provision.⁶⁷

Interviews

As well as obtaining general information about each business, the interviews examined general attitudes to, and perceptions of, sustainability, and any sustainable business practice undertaken by the business owners.

⁶⁶ Business Link for London, "London Annual Business Survey" (Business Link for London and London Development Agency, 2004).

⁶⁷ London Development Agency, "Redefining London's BME-owned businesses" (LDA, March 2005).

Individual businesses

Using London Food Link's extensive network of growers, producers, suppliers and community supported food growing and distribution projects, many businesses were contacted to take part in the survey. We sought to interview a representative range of independently owned BAME food businesses. Some manufacturers specialise in products that meet the tastes and needs of a particular ethnic community; others concentrate on products for mainstream consumers; while others have developed products aimed at an ethical consumer. Some of the companies we talked to manufacture products that communicate deep held values of environmental sustainability while others have adopted simple rules of thumb on purchasing ingredients. Some businesses use their products to communicate social values. And others are just trying to deliver the right product at the right price in a very competitive market. However, our qualitative research has turned a spotlight on many inspiring individuals and organisations working to improve the sustainability of what we eat.

We conducted a combination of face-to-face and telephone open-ended interviews with BAME owners of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in London's food sector. Micro and SMEs form the majority of London's BAME-owned businesses and offer insight into the business attitudes leading to, or preventing, purchase of sustainable ingredients and adoption of other policies on sustainability. The male and female owners came from a range of ethnicities, but all described themselves as British.

We also approached business owners attending business support events and trade exhibitions to complete structured questionnaires. From these owners we selected those willing to take part in in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face and by telephone. Interviews with 14 of these business owners are summarised in the case studies (see page 61) featured in this report. These businesses cover a range of activities in the food chain, including horticulture, manufacture, wholesale, catering and retail, and have agreed to their interviews being published in this report.

Events

We held a focus group with Haringey Council's Food & Drink Cluster, a networking and business support initiative funded by City Growth Haringey and the LDA. The meeting was held in December 2005 at Haringey Civic Centre. Eighteen people attended, including representatives from Green Lanes traders' associations, eight business owners and Haringey's Chief Environmental Health Officer.

We also conducted structured consumer interviews with 63 Asian attendees out of the 55,000-strong crowd attending the London Mela, held Sunday August 14th 2005 in Gunnersbury Park.

We interviewed two business support intermediaries who were willing to invest time discussing interpretations of sustainability concepts, and motivations or potential barriers for incorporating them into business practices. We also attended a number of local and regional business support events that targeted BAME-owned food businesses to publicise this project and engage the interest of owners already using specialised support for business development and growth. One particular event was the World Food Market (a trade show for companies in the ethnic and speciality foods market, with a focus on halal and kosher products) held in November 2005 at ExCel London. We combined research for this report with work for London Food Link's LDA-commissioned consultation on the draft London Food Strategy, and undertook a structured survey of 26 companies exhibiting at this event.

Limitations

Despite this extensive research, this project wishes to acknowledge the diversity amongst and within London's ethnic communities and the danger of defining these communities as a homogeneous group. We have only scratched the surface of London's BAME communities, and much more research needs to be done. The business owners interviewed expressed their ethnicity in different ways; when questioned many defined the place they were born (for example, West London) or their religion. Two businesses surveyed did not wish to reveal their ethnicity because they did not think it was an important feature of their business.

The London Mela

The London Mela has been held for four years. Mela is a Sanskrit word meaning 'to meet', used to describe community celebrations and festivals in the Asian subcontinent. A long-standing tradition in South Asia, the Mela strengthens communities by bringing people together in a festival atmosphere where everyone can enjoy food, music and dance. Several of the regular food stall-holders have shown an interest in using and promoting sustainable food. See: www.london.gov.uk/mayor/asian_london/



In addition, the sample of businesses surveyed can only be indicative of the attitudes of BAME-owned food businesses, and cannot represent all such businesses. Furthermore, although we aimed to speak to businesses operating at each stage of the supply chain, from food growing through to manufacture, catering, wholesale and retail, we were not able to identify businesses to represent every stage in the time available. Food growing businesses are particularly badly represented in the survey, perhaps understandably given the urban London focus. And we found only two BAME food marketing businesses, both in early stages of development.

We should also note that, as they are in competitive business, some companies were a little cautious about divulging business information. It is, understandable for example, that some businesses did not want to reveal precisely how much of their product range was made from scratch, and how much they bought in.

Notwithstanding these limitations, and the need for more research, we are confident that the conclusions and recommendations we reach are sufficiently robust to be worth pursuing.

Finally, throughout our research, we have made every effort to ensure that interviewees understood what we meant when we talked about sustainability and sustainable food. Many of the people and organisations that feature in this report told us about work to support sustainable food - whether it be, for example, by buying food from local suppliers, manufacturing products from organic ingredients, or using sustainable packaging. However, we did not seek to verify their claims, neither did we audit the activities for their claimed environmental or social benefits. Our aim was to find out more about the ethnic food sector in London, its activities, its attitudes and the barriers to change with regards to sustainability.

Exotic fruit & vegetable
stall in Market Row,
Brixton market

BRIXTON

FOOD

VARIETY

OF FOOD & GR

6 MARKET ROW



4. What we found

Problems

Lack of knowledge about skills for implementing sustainability

"Our community is very bad in these things. We don't make it a priority. We're not taught about looking after the environment."

By Chaat House Ltd

Throughout our research, talking to BAME consumers and food business owners about what the term sustainability means to them, few people fully understood the terms used. When interviewed, owners often expressed confusion; some doubted that the concepts described had any relevance to them, their business or their community. We note that this reflects the same widespread confusion about sustainability in the population as a whole. Several interviewees worked to ethical principles but were more concerned with immediate social issues that affect, for example, the Muslim community rather than broader considerations of local, national and international sustainability.

It is clear that the sustainability messages communicated by the major environmental groups and government organisations, are not reaching all communities. Findings from a series of seminars, led by consultants on social and environmental justice Capacity Global⁶⁸ in 2004, confirmed the need to examine the language of the environmental sector, which can be perceived as being concerned only with traditional issues of conservation and preservation of the environment, and not with social issues.⁶⁹

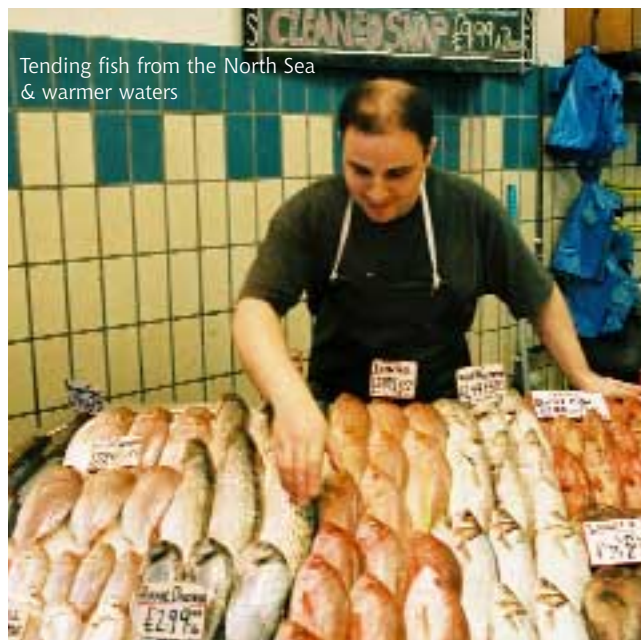
Business owners that we spoke to who had already incorporated sustainability into their business plans, such as Dinuk Dissanayake at The London Tea Company, had undertaken some research and were much more aware of the benefits of sustainable food to health, the environment and social equality. Interviewees such as FudCo Quality Products of Willesden, north-west London, however, were unaware of sustainability opportunities, for example that official accreditation exists for organic suppliers in India.

68 Capacity Global works to encourage full community participation in developing effective strategies for social justice, eradication of poverty and a healthy environment. www.capacity.org.uk.

69 Maria Abedowale, Chris Church, Penny Shepherd, "Environmental Justice in London" (London Sustainability Exchange, 2004).



Lutfi Radwan date stamping organic eggs, Willowbrook Farm



Tending fish from the North Sea & warmer waters

In addition, despite the widespread support for aspects of sustainable food and farming (see section 2) there remains some misunderstanding about the impact of food and farming businesses on local communities, even when those businesses are aiming for sustainability. The Radwans at Willowbrook Farm in Oxfordshire, for example, met some resistance to their plans to farm chickens organically and live on their land.⁷⁰ Local residents objected to the Radwans' plans because of fears that Willowbrook Farm would encourage other development, bring more traffic and increase the risk of pollution in the River Cherwell. Lutfi Radwan explained that the farm was a conservation project to produce organic food, restore a pond and plant a small woodland. He did not believe the river was at risk of contamination because neither pesticides nor heavy farm machinery would be used. However, despite this explanation, and their planning application being supported by the Bishop of Oxfordshire (whom Lutfi knew from taking part in an inter-faith discussion group) opposition was such that the Radwans had to withdraw their application to live on the land. Only after a second application were their plans approved by the local council.

70 "Villagers 'up in arms' over plans for chicken farm", 18th Feb 2002, www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk

71 We conducted structured interviews with 63 Asian attendees attending the London Mela, held Sunday August 14th 2005 in Gunnersbury Park.

72 Andrea Revell and Robert Blackburn, "UK SMEs and Their Response to Environmental Issues," ed. Small Business Research Centre (Kingston University, March 2004).

73 The London Development Agency's January 2006 review of business support (LDA, Business Support Review, January 2006) reports that sustainability is a cross-cutting theme that must be addressed in all its business support activities. However, support is focused on large businesses with over 249 employees, and mainly on businesses already in the environment sector.

Higher cost of sustainable food, and lack of money to invest in change

Some owners talked about the difficulty in expanding their business because of a lack of staff trained in ethnic cooking techniques and cuisines. Other owners lacked the capital to invest money in training staff, or to hire professional help in tackling immigration procedures for hiring skilled staff from overseas.

Movement into new markets can pose major problems, especially if money is tied up in the business itself. Tanoj Shah at Gazebo Fine Foods, for instance, understands the need for his company to identify new markets for launching new products. However, he is unconvinced that the investment required to develop an organic or fair trade product will yield the necessary return for the company to remain profitable.

Similarly, the small Sussex-based food-growing company NamaYasai aimed to grow Japanese vegetables for the London market of specialist restaurants and retailers. However, the company found it difficult to gain access to land for commercial growing. NamaYasai could not afford the capital investment required to buy land. As tenants, the landowners also placed restrictions upon the company's growing activities.

It must also be recognised that organic, fair trade, and in some cases, locally produced food is simply more expensive. Organic food being too expensive was stated by most respondents at the London Mela⁷¹ as their reason for not buying it. Many of the business owners we spoke to, including those exhibiting at the World Food Market, were unconvinced that their customers would pay extra for a product made from sustainable ingredients. In general, they were concerned that the cost of sustainable ingredients would make their products uncompetitive.

Inappropriate help available

While there is high-level government support for developing a sustainable food and farming system (see section 2, 'Why Green'), there is less practical support for small businesses to green their supply chains and develop new products. Policies to support SMEs have emphasised voluntary action towards sustainable business practice, encouraging the environment to be seen as a peripheral issue.⁷² Policy makers are still tending to rely on the market to make sustainability central to business management.

As a result, business owners seeking help on sustainable business practice often do not know where to turn. Mainstream business support agencies are not encouraged to offer advice on sustainable business practice as routine good business practice.⁷³



Ikuko Suzuki in NamaYasai's one acre smallholding



Port Royal Patties' distinctive delivery van

While business owners interviewed were aware of some mainstream business support services, people like Johnson Samuels of Caterers International reported that they encountered too many documents and not enough practical help. He was worried about "the red tape" involved in developing and marketing a line of sustainable products. Others have noted that the coherence and impact of the environmental support services to London's business community need to be improved,⁷⁴ and that mainstream business support often does not have the expertise either to advocate sustainable practices or offer practical help.

When looking for land for commercial growing, for example, NamaYasai were of the opinion that Defra's new single farm payment subsidy was a disincentive for landowners to rent out land to tenants. We telephoned the Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) single farm payment helpline and found that this could be the case. We were told there can only be one claimant for the payment, but no formal ruling exists on whether it is the farmer or the tenant who should make the claim. The farmer and tenant must decide between themselves. The RPA did not have any information on who was tending to claim in reality.

74 David Fell of Brook Lyndhurst speaking at the London Development Agency's seminar "Mainstreaming environmental business support services" London, 9th March 2006.

75 Sustain, "Getting more sustainable food into London's hospitals: Can it be done? And is it worth it?" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2005). The Good Food on the Public Plate project found that some sustainable food producers were not large enough to cope with increased demand, did not adhere to relevant standards, were unable to make deliveries into London, or did not have the systems in place to control orders, see: www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=83

Lack of suppliers of suitable sustainable food

At the Haringey Food and Drink Cluster focus group, business owners did have a broad understanding of the principles of sustainability. However, members were unsure about how they would find wholesalers of sustainable food or purchase sustainable food without incurring costs that would be passed on to the customer. The group expressed doubts over the quality and consistency of supply of locally grown produce, and were unwilling to take the risk of switching from trusted suppliers. Problems of this nature were also experienced by Sustain's Good Food on the Public Plate project, which works to increase the amount of sustainable food used in public sector catering, including London hospitals.⁷⁵

Inadequate supply infrastructure

For religiously slaughtered meat

The quality and authenticity of some imported supplies of religiously slaughtered meat have been doubted.^{76 77} Such concerns could be answered by inclusion of religious slaughter principles in existing food traceability and accreditation schemes. However, there is currently no authority certifying organically raised or processed food that is also religiously approved.⁷⁸ For example, Willowbrook Farm in Oxfordshire sells organically raised, religiously slaughtered lamb and chicken, but can only communicate the fact by word of mouth, as organic rules exclude religious slaughter (requiring pre-stunning before slaughter, when religious principles tend to require slaughter by bleeding), affecting opportunities for the accreditation and labelling of the product.

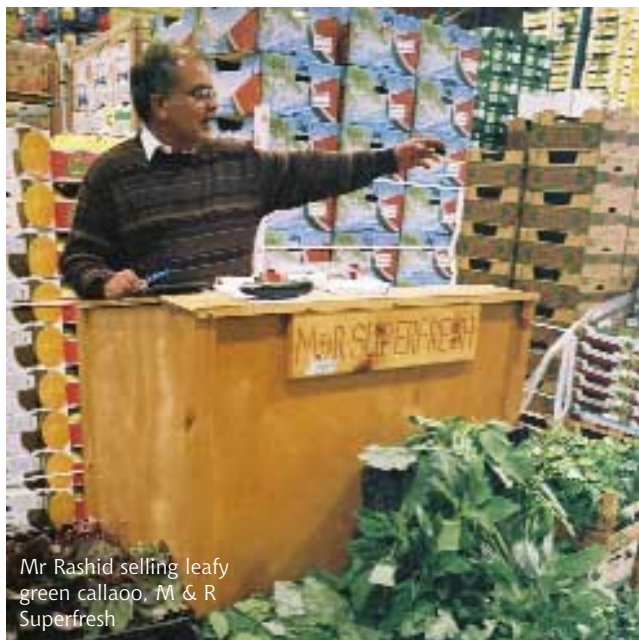
Dr Masood Khawaja, of the Halal Food Authority (HFA), says he would love to certify halal organic meat *"because in the Qu'ran, God says we are the leaders of the earth and we have a religious obligation to take care of it."* The HFA receives several enquiries each month from Muslims seeking organic halal meat, but Dr Khawaja's primary concern is monitoring compliance with religious dietary laws. He does not feel he has the capacity or expertise to monitor organic standards. Currently none of the bodies certifying organic meat and poultry will certify animals that have been religiously slaughtered.

76 Felicity Lawrence, "Beef and pork proteins found in imported chicken", The Guardian, 27th June 2006.

77 Dr Masood Khawaja, "HFA asks halal caterers to shun Dutch chicken", Halal Food Authority, www.halalfoodauthority.co.uk viewed on 13 June 2006.

78 The Soil Association (SA) will not certify any halal meat if slaughter has not involved stunning. A Soil Association spokesperson stated the standards prohibit religious slaughter and quoted the following:

- 42.8.2 The stunning process must maintain unconsciousness until the animal dies,
- 42.8.3 Must not slaughter animals without pre-stunning.



Mr Rashid selling leafy green callao, M & R Superfresh



Washing patties with egg whites, Port Royal Patties

For the food chain in general

It has been noted that the success of local food economies is hampered by fragmented local supply chains. This results in a lack of processing and distribution infrastructure.⁷⁹ The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), also reports⁸⁰ that alternative supply chains within the United Kingdom, from wholesale through to processing and the final sale to consumer, are being affected by the increasing domination of supermarkets. The supermarkets are increasingly reliant on long, consolidated chains that are able to meet changing demands and stringent quality standards. Smaller companies along the food chain are finding it increasingly difficult to compete.

Many of the businesses interviewed have established supply chains, often based on family or cultural allegiance.⁸¹ Some expressed difficulty in breaking out of these supply chains. Johnson Samuels at Caterers International in Feltham, West London, wishes to buy meat directly from producers, for example, rather than through established wholesalers in their area, but was unsure how to go about finding new suppliers without recommendations from friends and colleagues. The circulation of new information is limited in tight groups and so, consequently, are the chances of business success. Some business owners

79 Rose Bridger, "Growing the Local Asian Foods Market" (Bradford: Grassroots Food Network, September 2004).

80 Caroline Cranbrook, "The Real Choice: How local foods can survive the supermarket onslaught" (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, June 2006).

81 Richard Poole, in a seminar on the development of sustainable food infrastructure (King's Fund and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2005).

82 ABi Associates, "Supply Chain Stories" Black and Minority Ethnic Business Knowledge Centre, (ABi Associates, 2004).

have a desire to expand the number of suppliers,⁸² especially those wishing to increase sales by developing new products for new markets. Rajni Gupta Theiste of By Chaat House in Southall, West London, hopes to develop an organic yogurt drink by involving a willing supplier who can provide, free of charge, expertise and product for experimentation.

Uncertain demand for 'greener' curry

Mr Shah at FudCo Quality Products of Willesden, north-west London, was not the only person of the opinion that there is little market for organic ethnic products. His customers are mainly from the Asian community and, he believes, are not concerned with sustainability issues. He assumes that purchasing sustainable food will incur costs that his customers simply will not pay. The perception amongst some business owners and some Asian consumers, for example at the London Mela festival (see box on page 22) was that demanding customers from ethnic communities are only interested in the best quality available at the keenest price.

Another opinion voiced by consumers and owners was that 'ethnic' food inevitably means imports, which inevitably means unsustainable. Although there was awareness of terms such as 'food miles' people seemed resigned to the fact that in order to meet the food needs of ethnic communities, food would have to be imported. People were not accustomed to asking questions about, for example, where or how a bunch coriander leaves had been grown, or how it had been transported.

Food miles

The concept of 'food miles' presents an argument to buy goods which have travelled the shortest distance from farm to table, and to discriminate against long-haul transportation, especially air-freighted goods. The long-distance transport of food is associated with additional greenhouse gas emissions, the consumption of out-of-season produce, a lack of accountability in the supply chain and a disconnection between the public and local farming.





Eggs laid by an organically raised Lohman Brown chicken



Packaging line, Port Royal Patties

Opportunities

Small is beautiful

"It is smaller companies, unconstrained by huge structures, who are nimbler; able to zip in and out of new markets, developing opportunities and ideas to outperform their rivals."

Alan Johnson MP, then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry⁸³

It has long been recognised that small, independent businesses, close to their market, can identify and move rapidly to meet changing customer demands. Business people from ethnic minorities are noted for utilising family, cultural and social networks to realise entrepreneurial goals: raise finance, identify markets and quickly fill any gaps in supply.⁸⁴

This could lead to growth in the market for ethnic food and new products⁸⁵ that meet the needs of the growing numbers of ethical consumers. Growing markets could, in turn, fuel product innovation, higher margins, increased profitability and

83 Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, "Multicultural businesses in a multicultural economy" speaking to the Ethnic Minority Business Forum, London, 20th March, 2006.

84 J. Rath, "Do immigrant entrepreneurs play the game of ethnic musical chairs? A critique of Waldinger's model of immigrant incorporation" in: A. Messina (ed.), *A Continuing Quandary for States and Societies: West European Immigration and Immigrant Policy in the New Century*. Greenwood Press, 2001.

85 ABi Associates, "Supply Chain Stories" Black and Minority Ethnic Business Knowledge Centre, (ABi Associates, 2004).

investment for future growth. In their report,⁸⁶ the CPRE celebrates smaller farms and producers who, for example, manufacture a great variety of distinctive products, packaged in interesting ways that are sold to local shops.

In the same way, within BAME business and social networks of competitors, customers and suppliers, (perhaps concentrated in a geographical - usually urban - area) we see an opportunity for specialised research and training.

Some specialist infrastructure still exists

It has been suggested that the varied systems that supply food to multicultural communities already constitute an alternative to the mainstream supply chains driven by supermarkets.⁸⁷ Although these supply chains may be small, or specialised, or limited in some other way, at least they still exist and can be built on. Other parts of the mainstream supply chain - for example, local independent shops, markets, abattoirs and wholesalers - are already gone.

It has been noted that for East Asian businesses (especially Chinese) many of the basic food supplies of restaurants and retailers can only be obtained from dedicated wholesale businesses. Many owners of businesses in the ethnic food supply chain are self-taught and so shared knowledge with secondary suppliers along the supply chain is a valuable source of advice; businesses will often share new technology, processes, contacts or ideas for improving business.⁸⁸

However, these businesses sometimes rely on costly, specialised supply chains. For example, the highly prized exotic lychees usually travel by air. As a result, they are expensive both in terms of carbon dioxide emissions and price. Sea shipments have been tried in the past but failed because the fruit arrived in an unsaleable condition. However, there are recent reports that a variety of lychee unique to China, the Red Empress, has now been successfully sea-freighted to Europe.⁸⁹ Chinese market agents are surprised and enthusiastic about the fruit's good quality and lower price.

86 Caroline Cranbrook, "The Real Choice: How local foods can survive the supermarket onslaught" (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, June 2006).

87 Mama Toro Adeniran-Kane MBE, African Women Arts and Heritage Development (AWAD), speaking at *Good Food up North*, organised by the Ethnic Food Action Group Bradford, June 2006. AWAD promotes farming, environment and rural link issues for the African community in the UK.

88 ABi Associates, "Supply Chain Stories" Black and Minority Ethnic Business Knowledge Centre, (ABi Associates, 2004).

89 Freshinfo is an online news service for the fresh fruit and vegetable business. www.freshinfo.com viewed on 19 June 2006.

Some traders at New Spitalfields Market have specialised in wholesaling fresh produce for ethnic community food businesses. Imran Patel's customers at M&R Superfresh are prepared to pay a premium, not only for speciality air- and sea-freighted exotic fruit and vegetables that cannot be grown in the UK, but also for the very fresh and high quality "exotic" Chinese greens that can. Imran suggests that his customers are concerned with buying the best quality produce available, no matter where it may have been produced.

Products that carry a Fairtrade mark, such as Ceylon tea from the London Tea Company, already have an accountable supply chain that guarantees closer links between consumer and producer and a greater respect for the environment. AgroFair, the major UK importer of fair-trade fruit, suggests that mainstream customers are more willing to pay a premium for produce carrying the Fairtrade mark which "*is an extra prompt to purchase and change buying habits*".⁹⁰

Some practical support is already available

The Mayor's Green Procurement Code was set up in June 2001, and initially focused on stimulating demand for the purchase of recycled content products (RCPs), from stationery to builders' aggregate, throughout London. The Code is implemented on behalf of the Mayor by London Remade, a not-for-profit organisation. There are currently 457 public and private sector signatories to the Mayor's code for the period March 2004-April 2005.⁹¹

By 2016, it is hoped that London will be a city that makes efficient use of finite resources and energy, and realises the scope for the development of green industries. The Government's sustainable development strategy also suggests that the UK should become a leader in sustainable procurement in Europe by 2009.⁹²

In addition, some business support agencies such as ABi Associates are identifying the benefits of sustainable business practice for their clients,⁹³ including the importance of green purchasing policies to win public sector procurement contracts. This is a good example of environmental business advice being offered by a mainstream agency, fulfilling objectives to promote both competitiveness and sustainability. Others, such as Enterprising East End, offer environmental audits to assess a business's sustainability and make recommendations for improvement. More sources of environmental business advice may be found in Appendix II, "Where to get more help".

90 Elspeth Water, "Profile on Exotics" *Fresh Produce Journal* (December 2005).

91 London Remade, "Mayor's Green Procurement Code Year Three Purchase Report, 2004-2005" (London Development Agency, November 2005).

Sustainability is already part of many cultures

"Who were the first environmental campaigners? The world's religions."

Alliance of Religions and Conservation International⁹⁴

Drawing on their traditions, faith communities are working in countless ways to care for the environment and are, at least in principle, committed to conservation and stewardship.^{95 96} Each faith has its own distinctive history and teachings as well as its own unique, codified relationship with the natural world. A summary of 11 of these, from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation International, is reproduced in Appendix I, "Faith and ecology".

In the summer of 2005, London Sustainability Exchange (LSx), as part of its Motivate London project, sought to engage people through their faith beliefs. The project encouraged Londoners to adopt more sustainable lifestyles by raising awareness, and persuading them to change behaviour. LSx reports that a large proportion of worshippers were encouraged to use energy-efficient light bulbs.⁹⁷

In fact, many of the business owners we spoke to were motivated by their faith to support, for example, youth sports in the local community. It is therefore only a short step from these links between faith and concern for sustainability, to incorporate food choices into these concerns. It is, potentially, a very significant market that some BAME businesses are well placed to move into.

92 The Sustainable Development Commission, "Securing the Future - UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy" (London: The Sustainable Development Commission, 2005).

93 Kemal Ahson, "Green, Lean and Sometimes Mean: Green Supply Chains" (ABi Associates, January 2006).

94 ARC was founded in 1995. It is a secular organisation working with 11 faiths worldwide to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. See www.arcworld.org

95 John Vidal, "The Greening of Islam" The Guardian, November 2005.

96 Daniel Dickinson, "Eco-Islam hits Zanzibar fisherman" BBC News, February 2005.

97 London Sustainability Exchange, "Means of motivation and powers of persuasion" (LSx, 2006).

Well stocked food stall,
Market Row, Brixton market



5. What we think should happen now

Stimulate demand for 'greener curry'

In the public sector

"Caterers in schools, hospitals and other public-sector organisations are becoming increasingly interested in cooking healthy, fresh and sustainable food. They understand the many benefits of spending taxpayers' money to support local food systems, local farmers and menus that are better for not only customers but also the environment."

Mathew Castle, Good Food on the Public Plate , Sustain

Previous research into the opportunities for greening the supply chains of SMEs in all sectors has highlighted the practical difficulties in business support agencies of not only explaining sustainability issues to businesses, but even engaging with them on this agenda. Businesses lack awareness of the potential opportunities in sustainable procurement especially public sector procurement. In fact, the way that SMEs find out about these opportunities is perceived as being uncoordinated and inflexible.⁹⁸

The public sector is increasingly expected to incorporate sustainability into the way it spends and invests taxpayers' money⁹⁹ (see box "Public money pays for sustainability" on page 38). There is also widespread acknowledgement that when sustainable procurement is practised by public sector professionals, this motivates suppliers to be aware of their own opportunities to buy products sustainably.¹⁰⁰ This is a good market opportunity for food businesses.

Johnson Samuels at Caterers International is one business owner who recognises sustainability as a way to generate income from a different market opportunity, such as becoming a second-tier supplier to a public sector contractor. He is keen to supply culturally appropriate meals to elderly people in care homes, or those using Hounslow Council's meals-on-wheels service. He is prepared to consider a sustainable food sourcing policy if, all else being equal, it equips him with the competitive advantage to secure a care home catering contract.

98 Kemal Ahson, "Green, Lean and Sometimes Mean: Green Supply Chains" (ABi Associates, January 2006).

99 For examples see: Department of Health, "Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier, ed. Department of Health (HM Stationery Office, 2004) and The Sustainable Development Commission, "Securing the Future - UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy" (London: The Sustainable Development Commission, 2005).

100 For examples see: Sustain and East Anglia Food Link, "Good Food on the Public Plate: A Manual for Sustainability in Public Sector Food and Catering" (London: Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2003) and Sustain, "Getting More Sustainable Food into London's Hospitals: Can It Be Done? And Is It Worth It?" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2005).

Public money pays for sustainable food

A staggering £1.8 billion of taxpayers' money is spent on food in public-sector organisations. The catering services of organisations such as schools, hospitals, prisons, care homes, as well as the police, fire brigade and others, are beginning to understand what difference they could make if they spent their money in a way that supports the local economy, supply chain infrastructure and food sustainability. The money can also support the development of sustainable food businesses owned by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, in support of social inclusion and equality objectives.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supports a flagship programme called the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI), working with public-sector catering. Sustain and many of its members have been among the early pioneers of sustainable public sector food procurement as part of this programme. After an initial two-year pilot project, which aimed to increase the proportion of local and/or organic food to 10% of the catering provision of four London NHS hospitals (with the Royal Brompton achieving 15%), Sustain has now expanded its work to schools and care homes. Under the name Good Food on the Public Plate, this new phase of the project will work with at least 20 hospitals, five schools and five care homes in London and the South East to increase the amount of sustainable food being served as part of their routine catering. In 2005, Sustain also worked with Camden Council to develop a borough-wide policy for sustainable food procurement for school meal provision.

Sustain supports the idea of promoting an ethnically diverse range of suppliers as part of this programme, but also recognises that many small-scale ethnic food businesses may need special support to enable them to meet sustainability criteria, and expand their businesses to meet the demands of public sector procurement. These are some of the areas that London Food Link, a project of Sustain, seeks to address.

For the Defra PSFPI scheme, see: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/index.htm>

For Sustain's Good Food on the Public Plate project, see: <http://www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=83>

For Sustain's work in Camden, see: <http://www.sustainweb.org/news.php?id=130>

Reinvesting money in the community

Established in 1999, the South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Trust is the largest mental health trust in the country. SLaM provides mental health and substance misuse services to seven London Boroughs and is an excellent example of what the public sector can do. Operating from over 180 sites, the Trust employs 4,500 staff and serves over half a million meals a year to its patients. Following a review of its catering services, the Trust tackled issues such as the quality of food and meeting the diverse needs of patients. The Trust decided it needed to encourage new suppliers - particularly local businesses, BAME businesses and social enterprises. Scotch Bonnet Catering, part of the Southside Partnership, produces African-Caribbean meals while also providing employment and training for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities. At present, meals are not cooked with sustainable ingredients but fresh produce, fish and meat are all bought from independent, BAME-owned businesses operating in Brixton market. SLaM has supported Scotch Bonnet to achieve accreditation as an NHS supplier and, in March 2005, committed to a contract to purchase frozen meals. Scotch Bonnet now provides Bethlem Royal Hospital in Beckenham, south-east London, with 500 meals per week.

Zoë Reed, Executive Director, of SLaM's Developing Organisation and Community Unit is reported as saying, "Working with Scotch Bonnet not only enables us to source local products and improve the choice and quality of food, but it also means money is reinvested into the community."¹⁰¹

In black and ethnic minority communities

Research has shown that part of the failure to engage BAME communities with sustainability is due to inappropriate language, location or style of information and communications on sustainability themes. But all of these can be overcome.

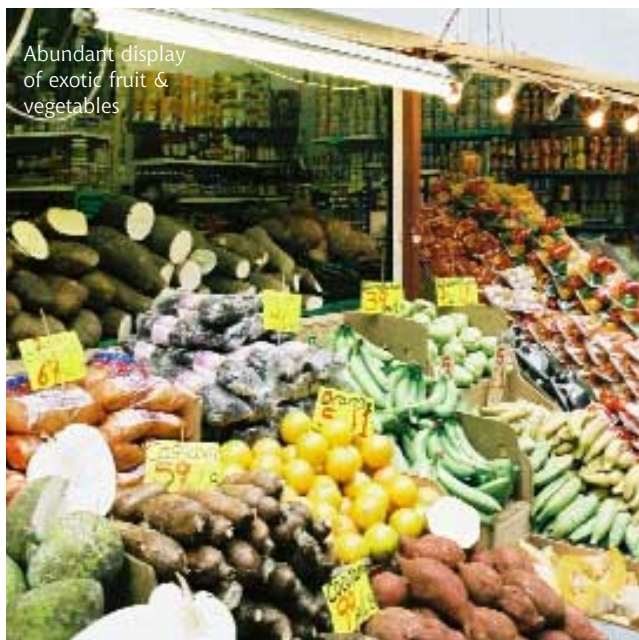
In 2004, Gillian van der Meer, then president of the Women's Food & Farming Union, set up a stall at the Lambeth Mela festival. On the stall she hung bright pictures of the Red Tractor¹⁰² logo with posters explaining its meaning in Sanskrit, Swahili and Yoruba. Gillian wanted to see if Lambeth's multicultural residents were interested in learning about this farm quality assurance scheme, and its significance for food quality, farming and the rural landscape. As Gillian had suspected, the stall was greeted with great interest, especially by

101 Social Enterprise Coalition, "More for Your Money: A Guide to Procuring from Social Enterprises for the NHS" (NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, www.socialenterprise.org.uk, viewed on 3 August 2006).

102 The Red Tractor logo, launched June 2000, unites many of the existing farm assurance schemes together under one mark. The logo officially certifies that food has been produced to independently inspected standards right across the food chain - from farm to pack. www.redtractor.org.uk



Butcher's stall, Brixton market



Abundant display of exotic fruit & vegetables

women, keen to identify where to find good quality food for their families. Gillian proved to herself that members of multicultural communities were just as concerned as everyone else about food issues; it only required someone to speak to them on their own turf, in places where they shop, pray, work and socialise.

Successful work is being undertaken by a number of not-for-profit organisations with the participation of 'sustainability champions'¹⁰³ in a specific ethnic community. The champions involve members of the community and identify how best to engage people, in a practical way, in the economic, environmental and social benefits of sustainability.¹⁰⁴ This results in localised, community-based initiatives, led by members of the community and that have resonance with that community.

In the summer of 2005, for example, members of the London Islamic Network for the Environment (LINE)¹⁰⁵ donned flippers and snorkels to demonstrate against climate change in Brick Lane, the heart of London's Bangladeshi community. Drawing attention to themselves with outrageous

¹⁰³ London 21 Sustainability Network is currently recruiting a team of seven Community Mentors as part of its multi-ethnic environmental engagement programme. www.london21.org.uk

¹⁰⁴ The Black Environment Network has published guidance for environmental and heritage sectors to enable full participation by ethnic communities in the built and natural environment. See Black Environment Network, "Ethnic Communities and Green Spaces: Guidance for Green Space Managers" (Llanberis: BEN, 2005) and Black Environment Network, "Promoting Employment Opportunities to Ethnic Communities: Guidance for the environmental and heritage sectors" (Llanberis: BEN, 2005).

¹⁰⁵ LINE is the UK's first local Islamic environment group. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LINEnotices/>

costumes allowed LINE to highlight the fact that sea level rises threaten Bangladesh probably more than any other country.

Similarly, Hackney Neighbourhoods and Regeneration team worked with the Day-Mer Turkish and Kurdish Community Centre to find ways to communicate the Council's initiatives on recycling. Messages in mainstream media were not reaching the Turkish speaking community so Day-Mer distributed leaflets to Turkish-owned shops and restaurants that explained the terminology in Turkish. As these outlets are visited every day by women in the community, this proved effective in changing the management of their households.

Moving from general environmental issues to food, Taste of a Better Future Network is a local food project organised by the Women's Environmental Network (WEN). Certain groups have little access to affordable, fresh, organic food, or gardens to cultivate it. WEN's project supports and empowers multicultural women's groups, and other inner-city groups, to develop their own food growing skills. During harvesting season, WEN's Culture Kitchen brings groups together to celebrate, with delicious cuisine, the inner-city harvest.

Another food project is the Coriander Club at Spitalfields City Farm in Tower Hamlets, where a group of Bangladeshi women meet at the farm on a weekly basis. They grow ethnic vegetables that are cooked in healthy eating classes and sold to members of the community. Last summer's successful harvest encouraged locals to buy produce in bulk. The Club is always looking for more land to take advantage of this opportunity to earn money, and they are aiming eventually to become financially self-sufficient.

All these examples - and there are many more - simply illustrate what is possible if, like professional marketers, the message - in this case about sustainable food - is tailored appropriately to the audience.

In the market in general

Many manufacturers we interviewed were concerned they did not have the skills or capacity to research and market a sustainable product. Rajni Gupta Theiste of By Chaat House in Southall, West London, asked why London does not have its own Regional Food Group (see box "The importance of Regional Food Groups" on page 42), promoting a regional brand of foods produced locally to London.

The importance of Regional Food Groups

The Regional Food Groups (RFGs) represent and promote quality, small and medium-sized food and drink producers within their region. Their aim is to assist member businesses to develop and expand profitable, economically sustainable markets for their products. To this end, RFGs establish contacts and build relationships with food retailers, wholesalers and food-service companies.

RFGs receive funding from, among others, Food from Britain¹⁰⁶ and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). A number of the RDAs are contributing to the development of sustainable food economies in their areas, by supporting local food events, directories, farmers' markets, organic production and farm diversification.¹⁰⁷

However it has been noted that RFGs often try to achieve their aims by promoting regional locality foods for export out of the region, rather than local foods to meet the needs of the region's communities.¹⁰⁸ Although this can attract investment into the region's economy from large, national food companies,¹⁰⁹ the local food system then becomes more consolidated, with minimal or negative returns to both the regional economy and local communities.¹¹⁰ Within today's increasing market for sustainable food sold through direct and alternative markets,¹¹¹ many argue that RFGs should recognise and offer support for entry into this alternative, sustainable food economy.

Not only do London's quality food and drink producers not have an RFG to represent them, London does not come under the remit of any existing RFG. Tellingly, when it comes to informing tourists of London's regional food,¹¹² Visit Britain's website lists London's food halls, street markets and ethnic communities rather than any foods that may be described as local to London.

106 Food from Britain (FFB) is a market development consultancy for British food and drink and is funded by government and industry. FFB has two objectives: to maximise exports of food and drink produced or processed in the UK; and to increase production and consumption of quality regional food and drink. See also www.foodfrombritain.com

107 Sustainable Food Chains, "Briefing 4: The English Regional Development Agencies; What are they doing to support sustainable food economies?" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2002).

108 Sustainable Food Chains, "Briefing 4: The English Regional Development Agencies; What are they doing to support sustainable food economies?" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2002).

109 "New local sourcing initiatives revealed at Tesco" 15th September 2006, Institute for Grocery Distribution, www.igd.com

110 Sustainable Food Chains, "Briefing 4: The English Regional Development Agencies; What are they doing to support sustainable food economies?" (Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 2002).

111 Soil Association, "Organic Market Report 2006" (Soil Association, 2006).

112 Visit Britain is the government's national tourism agency, responsible for marketing Britain worldwide and for developing England's visitor economy. www.visitbritain.com, viewed on 15th September 2006.

Food from Britain¹¹³ acknowledge that it does not have a food group, or even a dedicated post, working to promote and connect London's growers and producers with the regional market for sustainable food. It has, however, worked with Rob Furse, International Trade Adviser at UK Trade and Industry, to develop export markets for London's food manufacturers by exhibiting "Taste of London" stalls at national and international trade shows to showcase London manufacturers and their products. Many of the business owners we spoke to, including Winner Foods and Port Royal Patties, spoke of benefiting from increased sales as a result of meeting buyers at international trade shows such as SIAL and ANUGA.¹¹⁴

Coriander in Bradford - more local than Yorkshire pudding?

Running from winter 2002 to summer 2004, the 'Growing the Local Asian Foods Market' in Bradford¹¹⁵ brought together Asian allotment holders and growers, many of whom had been farmers in their country of origin. Through the project they shared their expertise with local farmers to grow speciality crops like coriander, fenugreek, callaloo (green, leafy tops of yams) and varieties of spinach which are widely used in Asian cooking. Local field trials tested different crops and growing methods.

Bradford's Grassroots Food Network teamed up with the Asian Healthy Community Network¹¹⁶ to explore possible local supply chains for the growing market for Asian foods. Asian retailers and wholesalers noted the similarity not only in the challenges facing small farmers in the South Pennines and farmers in their country of origin, but also the challenges for all small businesses as the food system becomes increasingly consolidated into the hands of major companies.

While researching the market, the Grassroots Food Network found there was demand for locally grown Asian crops and produce, with Asian customers paying a premium for freshness, quality and specific crop varieties. Because of lack of awareness, however, Asian customers, were not taking advantage of direct sales outlets for fresh produce, such as farmers' markets, farm shops and home delivery box schemes.

As a result of the project, locally grown speciality ethnic produce is now sold to a major Bradford based wholesaler.

113 Personal communication with Sarah Hodgins, Development Account Manager, Food from Britain, on 13th September 2006.

114 SIAL (www.sial.fr) in Paris and ANUGA (www.anuga.com) in Cologne are two of the food industry's biggest trade fairs for food and drink. They attract around 6,000 exhibitors each and professional buyers from all over the world.

115 Rose Bridger, "Growing the Local Asian Foods Market" (Bradford: Grassroots Food Network, September 2004).

116 The project was supported by the Farmers Fund and the EU Interreg IIIB SOSII (Sustainable Open Space) programme for marketing landscape identity.

Support sustainable food suppliers

Government support is required for projects to develop 'ethnic' food supply chains that are local to London, from farm to *thali*.¹¹⁷ For example, dairy farmers, getting low returns on their produce in the bulk milk market, could be offered training and investment to help diversify into value-added products to help meet the demand for strained yogurt, lassi (a yogurt drink) and paneer (a fresh curd cheese).¹¹⁸ London could also learn from Bradford (see 'Coriander in Bradford' box).

Delivering Khira Nightly...

When Mr Shah, a former restaurateur from Ilford, took his first crop of Bangladeshi vegetables to the markets of East London, he had a tough time convincing buyers that the produce had been grown on English soil.

"People didn't believe that it had been grown here. So I'd say, 'Think about it, is this in season now in Bangladesh?' And they'd realise that it couldn't have been grown in Bangladesh," says Shah, "because it was winter over there at the time." He soon realised he was filling a gap in the market: "They were amazed, and very happy to have these vegetables out of season when they weren't able to get hold of the imported produce."

The following year, Mr Shah rented an acre from farmer Jim Collins, at Ashlyns Organic Farm near Ongar in Essex. What he had started as a hobby to keep constructive during a period of unemployment was now the seed of a business venture. The first year at Ashlyns, he grew *khira* (a variety of cucumber) on the one-acre patch, and the vertical-growing *lau* (bottle gourd) economically filled in the spaces around the border. He wants to sell to more markets and to restaurants, which, he estimates, will particularly like the khira. To start making this a commercially profitable business, he figures he'll need at least 20 acres, a gamble that might just pay off.¹¹⁹

117 In Hindi, the word *thali* means a flat metal dining plate. The word is also used across India to mean the meal on the plate. The contents of the meal vary from region to region.

118 Rose Bridger, "Growing the Local Asian Foods Market" (Bradford: Grassroots Food Network, September 2004).

119 Gemma Elwin Harris, "Bangladesh in the Backyard" *The Jellied Eel*, (Sustain, January 2005).

120 Mr Sharif speaking at the London 21's Multicultural Environment Fair, Hackney Town Hall, June 2006

121 Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Organic Standards (ACOS) meeting, 6 October 2005, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/standards/acos/pdf/20051006.pdf>

Invest in infrastructure

Joined-up accreditation

"Young Muslims are asking questions about where their food is coming from."

Khalid Sharif, Managing Director of Ummah Foods in Ilford, West London¹²⁰

Following concerns that animals slaughtered without pre-stunning possibly breached animal welfare standards, the Advisory Committee on Organic Standards (ACOS) requested Defra to provide legal advice on whether certain methods of slaughter should be allowed to gain certified organic status,¹²¹ Defra subsequently advised that slaughter without pre-stunning does not mean that products cannot be certified organic, providing there is organic certification throughout the process.

Those certifying bodies responsible for accrediting the halal meat supply chain, for animal welfare assurance schemes, and for organic certification must come together to devise mutually acceptable ways to meet the demands of a new generation wishing to eat religiously approved organic food. Producers like the Radwans at Willowbrook Farm in Oxfordshire could then promote their organically raised, religiously slaughtered chicken and lamb to the Muslim market by carrying both certification marks. Mr Sharif of Ummah Foods suggested it would be helpful if the monitors of halal standards made it easier for small and non-Muslim sustainable food manufacturers to sell to the market for halal products. Reducing the complexity and variety of halal standards would encourage more manufacturers to meet the needs of London's growing Muslim population.

Marketing

"A community or an organisation that already has internal values, such as religious or social values, finds it much easier to identify with and support sustainable food."

Ayodeji Alaka, Osannimu Design

Infrastructure is not only about buildings (such as abattoirs) and certified supply systems like organic. It's also about logistics and, crucially, marketing. At business support events, we met the owners of two young marketing companies based in London (Ranji Thangiah of Rye Comment and Ayodeji Alaka of Osannimu Design) who see an opportunity for ethnic foods to reach a wider market by marketing high-quality, distinctive and sustainable ethnic food products.

However, many BAME food businesses are unconvinced that there is a market for sustainable ethnic foods, but have few options and little research to test this assumption.



Frying bhajis,
Gazebo Fine
Foods



Samosa production,
Gazebo Fine Foods

Port Royal Patties, for example, need to remain competitive with other hand-held savoury foods that appeal to a similar consumer, such as Cornish pasties. Pasty manufacturers such as Ginsters and Morris Pasties market themselves as locality foods, made to authentic recipes from local-to-Cornwall ingredients. How do Port Royal Patties test the market for a speciality, premium Jamaican pattie, made to an authentic recipe from local-to-London ingredients? They are unwilling to make the investment required for consumer research, marketing expertise and communication directly with the people who eat their patties. In contrast, By Chaat House's investment in new products resulted in higher quality, higher value products for new, more mainstream markets.

Distribution

Supplying food to London is a different proposition from other areas, not least due to the size of the city, traffic congestion, congestion charging and delivery logistics. Two reports have been produced, the foundations of which lie in Sustain's Good Food on the Public Plate project, which have had considerable bearing on London Food Link's ideas for developing sustainable food supply chains in the capital. These are: the report on the distribution barriers to increasing local food supply by Westley Consulting,¹²² and the sustainable food hub proposal by Ecologica.¹²³

122 Westley Consulting, "Distribution Research Report" (Sustain, 2004).

123 Professor John Whitelegg, "The London Sustainable Food Hub: Opportunities for a sustainable food logistics centre for London" (London Development Agency, 2005).

The distribution report makes clear and methodical recommendations for developing the markets for local food, organising its supply and defining its sustainable integrity and quality. The report explicitly recommends carrying out a feasibility study for a centre for the distribution of local food. In the Ecologica report this centre is envisaged as a 5,000 square metre food hub which supports a brokered supply of sustainable food from adjacent regions. It potentially contains storage, washing, packing, meat cutting, and dedicated organic facilities. Management of orders, partly through web-based systems, could reduce paperwork and manage traceability, quality control and health and safety imperatives. Four main customers are suggested for the hub, including public sector caterers such as hospitals. A feasibility study into a local food hub for London has attracted additional funding from the London Development Agency.¹²⁴

Provide tailored business support

Business support agencies have traditionally offered advice on economic objectives: improving competitiveness, increasing revenue, boosting profitability and creating jobs. However these agencies must now align economic motivations for sustainability and competitiveness, so that environmental business practice is as routine as food safety or health and safety at work. Caterers International, for example, noted that environmental management that led to reducing the cost of local authority waste collection services would be good for business.

More broadly, the financial risk of the volatile global oil market has been felt by food manufacturers.¹²⁵ The steep rise in oil costs has affected not only plastic packaging prices but also the cost of energy needed to run production units and transport goods to customers. For companies such as Gazebo Fine Foods, for example, saving energy makes good financial as well as environmental sense.

"They'll never look at their business the same way again."

Veronica Broomes, sustainability consultant, Global Action Plan

Veronica Broomes is consultant on sustainability, corporate social responsibility and environment. Contracted by Global Action Plan¹²⁶ to perform environmental audits, Veronica visits businesses to assess their environmental management practices and make recommendations for improvement. These recommendations focus on "quick wins" such as more efficient use of water and energy, recycling and minimising waste.

124 Sustain, "Getting more sustainable food into London's hospital: Can it be done? And is it worth it?" (Sustain, 2005).

125 "Food makers hurt by packaging, energy costs" 18th October 2005, www.foodanddrinkeurope.com

126 Global Action Plan is charity that helps people make practical, positive changes towards sustainability. www.globalactionplan.org.uk. Businesses are recruited through Enterprising East End, a business support agency covering the London boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

She visits businesses in all sectors, including food and drink manufacturing. Her main task is to educate and inform business owners and key staff about the principles of sustainable business practice, including: changing supplies of tea and coffee to fair-trade brands; recycling paper, which then offers access to a network of sustainable companies offering, for example, lower prices for white A4 copy paper; and switching off electrical equipment when not in use.

Veronica explains the benefits of sustainable business in terms that are relevant and attractive to the business she is visiting. For example, an Indian sweet company using organic buffalo milk (a traditional ingredient in the Indian sweetmeat *barfi*) bought from owners of a herd of milking buffalo in Warwickshire, was advised to base a marketing strategy on this locally produced ingredient. Another company was interested in grants for investing in equipment that minimised its waste.

She has found that business owners do respond to information that is presented in a way they understand. She tries to not be intimidating or pry too much into the details of a business but, if asked, Global Action Plan will advise on issues such as compliance with food safety legislation or a company's responsibility under the Waste Electrical and Electronic (WEE) directive.¹²⁷

To change a company's behaviour, Veronica believes she must invest time in visiting their premises and making relationships with management and staff. She sees that a "top-down" government approach often does not reach people, *"They don't have time to attend workshops"*.

Veronica is rare - government needs to fund more specialist sustainability advisors, especially in the food industry. The Recommendations (see page 51) show the range of advantages businesses could gain from such advice, such as saving money, investing in skills and opportunities for sharing information. We recommend that bodies like the London Development Agency, which invests more than £300 million a year to support the growth of new and existing businesses,¹²⁸ could be a conduit for business advice leading to both economic and environmental sustainability.

127 The WEE Directive requires mandatory collection, re-use and recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment throughout the European Union. Producers are responsible for the waste from their products. Waste electrical and electronic equipment is the fastest growing component of waste, most of which is landfilled or incinerated without any pre-treatment.

128 London Development Agency business support information, www.london.gov.uk/london-life/business-and-jobs/business-support.jsp viewed on 21st September 2006

The first shoots of fuki (Japanese Sweet
Coltsfoot) growing at NamaYasai



6. Recommendations

We believe there to be great potential to improve the sustainability of London's food system through work with ethnic food businesses - reaching out to new customers, and creating many new market opportunities. Our research shows that this sector presents unique challenges and has specific qualities and concerns that need to be addressed. As such, it has received little targeted support in the past, so its special requirements, and the means to address them, have largely been overlooked in policies or activities to achieve food sustainability.

In this report, we wanted to move beyond the idea that work with ethnic communities is largely to do with poverty-alleviation, although a community's economic and social sustainability does, of course, remain a strong theme within this report. We note that business support for black and minority ethnic communities (BAME) is often targeted at the poorest communities, funded by government bodies with purely economic objectives. Until recently, business support has done little to address the economic sustainability of small- and medium-sized businesses operating in the ethnic-owned food sector, let alone addressing their environmental or social sustainability. Our research suggests that instead, these businesses have often sought advice from family members, accountants and bank managers and that technical expertise on compliance with legislation has largely focused on food safety and employment issues. As a result, we observe that BAME food businesses have been flying under the radar of those offering business support in general, and specialist food sustainability advice in particular.

To some extent, recommendations for work with small and medium-sized ethnic food businesses to improve economic, environmental and social sustainability must address basic needs, such as awareness-raising, provision of information, marketing support, access to grants and low-cost loans for capital investment, and staff training. We think this is necessary to overcome the relative neglect that such businesses have experienced over recent years in a rapidly changing market. We believe that such support, adapted to meet the special requirements of ethnic food businesses, is necessary to enable many more to benefit from the activities planned over the coming years by the London Development Agency and organisations such as London Food Link, as London's sustainable food strategy is implemented. Our recommendations therefore cover basic business needs, as a necessary first step. In tandem, we also reinforce the need for wider infrastructure work to support a sustainable food system, such as sustainable food hubs (see "Distribution" on page 46). These are likely to work with a very broad range of suppliers and food businesses, of which ethnic food businesses should be an important subset.

After a process of interviews, consultation and review, we recommend the following activities to achieve greater uptake of sustainable food and sustainable business practices by London's ethnic food businesses.

Marketing sustainability

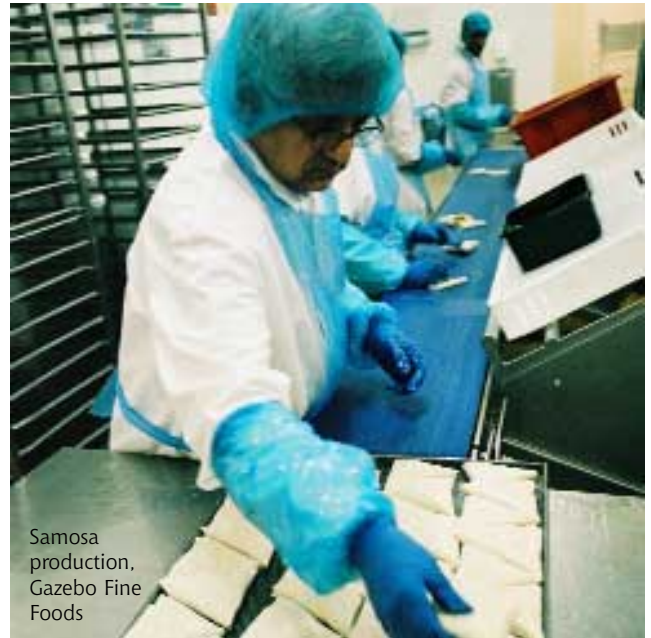
A range of organisations should identify ways to raise awareness of sustainability in ethnic food businesses. This should be for the two complementary purposes of (1) encouraging demand for sustainable products from ethnic food businesses, from ethnic and white communities, and (2) encouraging ethnic food businesses to start to adopt and promote sustainable products. Organisations should include those that operate where ethnic communities work, pray and socialise and should create good media interest. Many people and organisations are likely to play a role in this iterative process, and we do not give an exhaustive list here. But as first steps, we suggest that:

- Industry bodies such as the Institute of Grocery Distribution should build on their programmes of market and industry reports, looking specifically at the ethnic food market and opportunities for integrating sustainability into ethnic food businesses. This should include the whole ethnic food sector, from primary producer, through to wholesaler, manufacturer, distribution and marketing.
- Marketing organisations such as Mintel should undertake consumer surveys that answer questions about the demand and trends in demand for sustainability in ethnic foods, and particularly areas in which there are immediate opportunities that could be exploited.
- Business support organisations and London government agencies, such as the London Development Agency, Government Office for London and Greater London Authority should commission a needs assessment and market opportunities analysis for ethnic food and ethnic food businesses in London, looking at the domestic market (i.e. not focusing on export potential).
- High-profile ethnic food outlets including restaurants, retailers and wholesale markets should showcase sustainable ethnic foods, and communicate an inspiring story to customers about the economic, environmental and social benefits of choosing sustainable food.
- Likewise, local and national campaign organisations, and especially the fast growing ethnic media, should pick up on such stories to generate interest and demand. Such organisations, working with ethnic food businesses, should develop a programme of activities to promote sustainable food, for example at the many festivals that are popular with a diverse range of Londoners.
- Business support organisations, including London Food Link, should collect and publicise inspiring case studies of ethnic food businesses that have adopted sustainable products and practices. It should promote such businesses to new clients, and seek to publicise such work through new media channels likely to reach people from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds.

Specialist communications research and advice will be needed on the attitudes and preferred terminology of different ethnic communities to ensure that, when sustainability information is communicated, it is appealing to new audiences. Faith is a fundamental guide to life for many ethnic communities, and supply relationships with “mother” countries are often of great importance to this sector. We suggest that a meeting of key communicators (media, marketing and industry) could be convened by an appropriate body, such as the London Development Agency or London Food Link, to discuss the findings of this report and useful next steps.

As a result of this marketing work, we would hope that:

- London's ethnic food businesses recognise that they are missing out on market and business support opportunities in a rapidly changing food scene. Whilst help is likely to be needed, there is already significant potential for improving the sustainability of their food and operations, and public demand, to move towards more sustainable products and practices. They should start to communicate with organisations such as the London Development Agency and London Food Link and its members, to find out more.
- Customers overcome their reticence, and start to have conversations with food businesses about the provenance of their food; businesses should welcome such conversations and make more information available to customers.



Samosa
production,
Gazebo Fine
Foods



Loading scotch bonnet
peppers, New
Spitalfields Market

Support services for ethnic food businesses

The following is an extensive, though not exhaustive, list of the types of changes needed in support services that will help BAME food businesses become more sustainable.

- During 2007 and 2008, London Food Link will work with the London Sustainability Exchange to carry out environmental audits on food businesses around London, looking at the sustainability of their waste, water, energy and food supply. We will include a significant proportion of ethnic food businesses, to ensure that a diversity of businesses and communities benefit from this service.
- Specialist business support services that advise on sustainability should review the advice they give, to take into account both the special challenges of food sustainability, and the special needs and concerns of ethnic food businesses. The support services should move beyond waste, water and energy management and take into account the range of food issues detailed in this report and by Sustain.
- As recommended in another of its reports, also published in 2007 (*One Planet Dining*), London Food Link should stimulate the establishment of an association of restaurants, hotels, caterers and other food service outlets in London. This could:
 - Provide a stimulating forum for food businesses to engage with sustainability issues of common concern.
 - Encourage the food service sector to demand sustainable products from farmers, suppliers and local food manufacturers.
 - Help food businesses buy food and environmental services collaboratively, to improve fuel and cost efficiency, and to provide a stable market for food manufacturers, local suppliers and the proposed sustainable food hubs (see “Distribution” on page 46).
 - Identify enthusiastic entrepreneurial restaurant food business owners who can champion sustainability issues within the trade, and develop ways to address them in an upbeat and engaging way to enthuse customers and suppliers.
 - Connect food businesses to local food manufacturers and producers through a collaborative membership service and supplier database.
 - Develop association services that are of value to food businesses, such as meet-the-producer events, marketing support, promotion of seasonal foods, waste collection coordination, promotion of sustainable fish, facilitation of pilot projects (e.g. composting), and information about grants and business support.
 - Demonstrate to local producers that there is a market for speciality products and exotic produce for London's multi-cultural food market.

- London's food training establishments (e.g., catering colleges and business support organisations) should incorporate sustainability into their training programmes, especially encouragement of: local and seasonal produce; distinctive regional produce; fresh fruit and vegetables; and sustainable fish. They should seek advice from specialist sustainability organisations to ensure that their training is based on the best information. They should also tailor advice to address the special needs, concerns and cultural requirements of ethnic food businesses, and encourage uptake of the courses among such businesses.
- Sustain, London Food Link, borough food organisations (e.g., Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency) and the Soil Association should support businesses - especially ethnic food businesses - in a process of development towards meeting sustainability requirements for food contracts offered as part of the 2012 London Olympic Games. This should include work on both policy and practical aspects, to ensure that ethnic food businesses get a fair opportunity to participate.
- Food from Britain and the London Development Agency should fund a regional food group for London (possibly a development of London Food Link), with responsibility to develop sustainable food economies. Its remit would be to develop food marketing activities with a range of food organisations, but with a special focus on work with ethnic food businesses, and improving access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food for low-income communities, including those with a high proportion of people from BAME backgrounds.

Support from national and local authorities

Government bodies should recognise that food sustainability will not come about purely through voluntary action. A mixture of regulation, market stimulation, changes in costs (e.g., through fuel tax) and consumer education, alongside voluntary action by businesses, is likely to be necessary to achieve sustainability. Further, government bodies should recognise that many ethnic food businesses will lack the money and experience to meet the demands placed on food providers over the coming years, unless they receive targeted support now.

- Building on London's Food Strategy, launched in 2006, London's Mayor should declare the capital a city with specific aspirations to have an economically and environmentally sustainable food system. For example, London should become:
 - A city that supports an indigenous farming industry, especially in the near vicinity of London.
 - A city that uses only accredited sustainable fish
 - A Fairtrade city

In addition, the Mayor should require all relevant strategies and London-wide policies to take these aspirations into account, by putting in place policies and implementation plans that set out their achievement within a stated timescale. As a first step, food-related requirements of London's Green Procurement Code should be revisited, to take into account sustainability concerns in London's food industry and to strengthen commitments to using products from ethnic food businesses.

- Government bodies such as (nationally) Defra, the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health and (locally) the Greater London Authority and London Development Agency should show leadership by setting ambitious sustainable procurement targets for their own catering operations. This should place a strong emphasis on trading with small- and medium-sized ethnic food businesses, with terms that take into account the need of such businesses for support during an initial period of development towards meeting sustainability requirements. Government advice to consumers about food should also be reviewed regularly to take into account sustainable good practice.
- The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games should include sustainability requirements in its food contracts, and have percentage targets for the number of ethnic food businesses that it employs. London's government should ensure that, in food provision for the London Olympics, ethnic food businesses get a fair opportunity to participate.
- The London Development Agency should support collaborative activities to ensure that a range of food organisations, including diverse ethnic caterers and food manufacturers, are able to use the next few years to build skills and experience to meet food sustainability requirements of the 2012 Games.
- The London Development Agency should invest in the local food economy. This may be capital funds for 'incubator' kitchens where manufacturers can research and develop new products; training in the skills needed to find and tender for public- and private-sector food contracts; or access to marketing expertise for new products and new customers.
- Defra and the London Development Agency should sponsor new product development with ethnic food businesses using sustainable food, with full evaluation of economic costs and benefits as well as sustainability benefits, to demonstrate ways in which food sustainability can be practical, affordable, appealing to consumers, and can open up new markets (e.g., for foodservice, restaurants, procurement contracts and specialist food shops).

- The Competition Commission, in its review of national supermarket chains during 2007, should champion fair trading relationships between supermarkets and food suppliers, especially farmers and small- and medium-sized food manufacturers and farmers from poor countries. The Competition Commission must recognise that unless such businesses benefit from a fair share of food retail income, there will be no money to invest in the activities required for sustainable business practice, such as new equipment, new product development, accreditation, market research and staff training.
- Local authorities should support more diverse food provision, including planning support for food hubs and a variety of retail outlets that promote fresh local foods, favouring those businesses that work with local suppliers, those working to meet sustainability objectives, and those who buy a high proportion of food from sustainable ethnic food businesses.
- Local authorities should collaborate with food businesses and Community Recycling Networks to promote collaborative composting activities and other forms of waste management, and ensure that ethnic food businesses benefit from these services.



Port Royal Patty
production line. top
and bottom.

London Sustainable Food Hubs

- The Food Strategy Unit of the London Development Agency should continue to develop sustainable food hubs (see “Distribution” on page 46) to help coordinate suppliers producing food in the near vicinity of London. As a matter of course, such hubs should consider coordinating food deliveries, managing invoices, and supporting the marketing of seasonal and distinctive regional produce. Of special relevance to this report, sustainable food hubs should seek out clients from ethnic food businesses, and support their connection with farms that are local to London. Further, the hubs should also collect and supply information to growers about the needs of ethnic food businesses. They should seek to supply and support the production of ethnic speciality produce - particularly fresh horticultural produce from local growers. Attention should also be paid to how such collaborative activities combine this commercial work with other activities to help to improve access to healthy and affordable sustainable food for low-income communities, especially those with a high proportion of people from BAME communities.
- The Food Unit of the London Development Agency, London Food Link and the wholesale markets for London should investigate the potential for identifying, differentiating and promoting local and sustainable produce to London's food trade, especially ethnic food businesses, and provide supporting marketing materials.
- The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs should continue to promote organic farming in and around London, as part of the UK Organic Action Plan, and collaborate with sustainable food hubs to make connections between organic food producers and London food businesses, with special attention paid to ethnic food businesses.

Development of standards

- Authorities overseeing religious standards for food, such as halal and kosher, should enter into discussion with community leaders, food businesses, animal welfare assurance scheme managers, farmers, suppliers, sustainability organisations and regulators, to discuss ways in which religious accreditation can incorporate sustainability standards.
- Local Education Authorities, schools, hospitals and other public sector caterers should enter into discussion with authorities overseeing religious standards for food, such as halal and kosher, to demonstrate demand for sustainable food from ethnic food businesses.

- Standards-setting organisations such as the Soil Association, the Marine Stewardship Council and the British Retail Consortium, should review what support ethnic food business may need to help them qualify for accreditation, and what barriers exist to participation by ethnic food businesses.
- Recognising the value of accreditation and branding, those implementing the London Food Strategy, in collaboration with neighbouring Regional Food Groups, should pursue the development of a 'Local to London' brand. This brand would denote food produced close to London but also produced to high environmental, social and animal welfare standards.
- To ensure that small scale food producers from poor countries can also benefit from the increasing interest in ethical and sustainable food, and the premium price it attracts, the Department for International Development should invest in sustainability certification for developing countries.

And finally...

The work outlined above will not happen unless staff members in the various organisations mentioned (and others) are given the specific responsibility, preferably accompanied by targets, to ensure that the organisations engage in a creative and supportive way with ethnic food businesses. At London Food Link, we would welcome the opportunity to be able to work with such staff within a range of organisations, to enable networking, sharing of good practice and coordinated policy development. We would also welcome continued support from businesses and government, financially and in kind, to enable us to continue the work begun in this ground-breaking report.



Port Royal Patties waiting to be packaged

Case studies

The case studies are listed in alphabetical order.

Contact details for each can be found in Appendix III on page 113.

By Chaat House Ltd Southall, West London

"By Chaat House was set up in response to the growing demand for 'non chicken tikka' Indian ingredients and delicacies for people to buy and take home instead of going to a restaurant."

Rajni Gupta Theiste, By Chaat House

Who they are

Rajni Gupta Theiste's family owned the renowned Chaat House restaurant in Southall for 32 years. Diners came for Mrs Gupta's authentic, homemade Delhi street food or chaat (see box on the origins of chaat on page 64). Rajni recently sold the restaurant to concentrate on the manufacturing company she started with her two sisters in 2004. They spent one year developing a brand and products based on their mother's recipes. Rajni says her aim is to show mainstream consumers the versatility of good quality Indian ingredients. The award-winning Delhi's Green Chutney, for example, is a nice alternative to pesto, and the Punjabi Puris are used by caterers as a base for canapés or an alternative to tortilla chips.

One of Rajni's reasons for change is to move from serving the needs of the Indian community, who often look for cheap prices and value-packs, into the higher value, mainstream market for specialist foods.

"The look and price of our products doesn't fit with ethnic shops."

Rajni Gupta Theiste
By Chaat House



The product

Following one year of product development, By Chaat House now has three ranges of products:

- street food snacks, including roasted and spiced chickpeas, masala nuts and puris (crunchy, flour-based Indian crisps);
- Indian inspired drinks including Nimbu Paani (still lemonade), sherberts sweetened with unrefined sugar, and lassis (yogurt drinks);
- preservative-free chutneys and spice blends including curry masalas, kebab blends, pilau rice and seasoning for 'Delhi Salad'.

All products are accredited by the Vegetarian Society.

The firm uses local importers and distributors of dry goods and fruit and vegetables. Rajni uses the same suppliers as were used by her family at the restaurant, and she has not changed any of her suppliers in a long time. For Rajni, quality and taste of ingredients is her highest priority, and the resulting feedback from customers is very positive.

The company keeps no products in stock because of their relatively short shelf life. Five employees at a manufacturing unit in Greenford produce and package all customer orders from scratch. The spice blends are ground in the factory and then mixed and packaged to specification by a contractor.

Customers

To reinforce the brand's premium image, Rajni is focusing retail sales in upmarket food shops and delis in and around London. The firm supplies the components of chaat - puri, chutney and masala - to high end Asian restaurants (such as Tamarind and Imli in London) as well as to non-Asian caterers.

By Chaat House has sought business advice from various agencies, including Business Link for London's Foodwise,* and is a member of the Guild of Fine Foods. Foodwise sponsored the company's stall at the 2004 Speciality & Fine Food Fair, a London trade show that offers suppliers an opportunity to meet buyers from the UK and abroad. Rajni found customer feedback at the fair essential to developing the company's products. Rajni expressed disappointment that the Foodwise project has come to an end, and wondered why London did not have its own Regional Food Group providing a regional brand for marketing foods produced in London.

They will soon be launching their website for direct sales to customers.

"Our community is very bad in these things. We don't make it a priority. We're not taught about looking after the environment."

Rajni Gupta Theiste, By Chaat House

Sustainability

The firm's priority until now has been to develop and promote a high quality Indian product. Rajni did not believe she had the knowledge, time or money to invest in the process of becoming accredited as an organic producer, but she can see the market potential. They were unable, for example, to pursue one sales inquiry from the supplier of a network of organic stores, including West-London-based As Nature Intended organic food retailer, because of the supplier's strict rules on producers providing local, organic or fair trade products. With help, Rajni is willing to look at the company's drink and snack ranges as candidates for organic conversion.

* Funded from 2003 to 2006, the Foodwise project supported food and drink manufacturers in London. Foodwise organised annual trade exhibitions, London Food Fair, and published a local food directory, "A Taste of London ". See <http://subsite.madeinlondon.org/subsite/orangesite/default.aspx>

† Information on Chaat is reproduced from the Agni Restaurant website: www.agnirestaurant.com/chaat.htm

‡ India's national newspaper, The Hindu, www.hinduonnet.com viewed on 23 May 2006

It is said that the origins of chaat go back to 16th century Delhi...

The water supply had spread cholera through the city and emperor Shah Jehan looked for ways to stem the rising tide of deaths. Ayurvedic practitioners told the Shah of the healing properties of freshly made yogurt, and combinations of spices "that would light a fire inside the eater". By order of the Shah, Delhi's streets were filled with stalls selling spicy savouries and tangy lassis.[†]

Chaat is now used across India and the rest of South Asia to refer to small plates of savory snacks, typically served at the side of the road from stalls or carts. Some are results of cultural fusion - for instance, pao bhaji, in the form of a bun reflects a Portuguese influence and bhel puri was created by a Gujarati migrant to Bombay. Most chaat is based on fried dough, with various other ingredients. The ingredients are combined and served on a small metal plate or a banana leaf, dried and formed into a bowl.[‡]

Bronek's Deli, Ealing, West London

Who they are

First opened by Poles who settled in Ealing after fleeing their home country during the Second World War, Bronek's Deli only changed hands when Mr. Bronek took it over three years ago. He is the sole owner of the deli and leases the premises, which is run by friendly staff: two full-time, and two part-time Polish women. Annual turnover is just over half a million pounds.

Mr. Bronek started out testing culinary creations on his family and went on to expand his repertoire, cooking professionally in different cultural kitchens in the UK and abroad. Mr. Bronek catered for events such as beer festivals where he boasts that his Bigos, a traditional hunters' stew, goes down a treat. Mr. Bronek's enthusiasm for Polish food extended to

speaking on Polish radio about food issues and writing for Polish magazines and websites. These days, Mr. Bronek's energies are mainly devoted to running the deli and finding and creating authentic Polish delicacies for his customers.

The product

Virtually all the food sold here is imported from Poland; pickled vegetables packed in huge 'Krakus' brand jars, marinated herring, smoked fish, sausage, carrot and blueberry juice, *pierogi* dumplings of all sorts, meat, cheese, dried mushrooms, soups...the list goes on.

Mr. Bronek is quick to explain why Polish food is still so flavoursome. Although not labelled 'organic', food in Poland is still largely produced on acres of



Bronek's Deli, Ealing

fertile land by small family farms, without a chemical in sight. Under communism, most farmers were unable to pay for chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

In addition, Polish cooking is distinctive and dishes have well-defined flavours using sauerkraut, mushrooms and a variety of vegetables. The deli counter houses an impressive range of simple but delicious treats cooked on site by Mr. Bronek: fermented vegetable salads, potato pancakes, *golabki* (stuffed cabbage leaves in rich tomato sauce), plum dough-nuts and cheesecake.

But it is the bread, hand-made by Polish baker, Romek, using a sourdough starter passed down through countless generations of his family of traditional bakers, that has proved the most popular. Says Mr. Bronek: *"A few years ago, when all but luxury shops offered mass produced brown and white sliced bread, we were pioneers in offering real, handcrafted bread... Now sourdough bread is a new yuppie trend and we have another following."**

Customers

Ealing is home to a large immigrant Polish community so Mr. Bronek's home-cooked Polish treats have a loyal following. Mr. Bronek says 80% of his customers are Polish, although his food has found a niche among interested shoppers of various origins.

Mr. Bronek wants to keep the tradition of home-cooked food going and is on a mission to promote Polish food further afield. He plans to start tasting sessions outside the deli.

Sustainability

Without hesitation Mr. Bronek describes his core values as: "Honesty, openness, gregariousness, sharing and following one's heart," and says he tries to make his business an outward expression of these ideals.

Mr. Bronek avoids buying from warehouses stocking industrially produced food. Though Mr. Bronek thinks his buying volumes are too small to buy directly from British producers, he is in touch with suppliers in Poland who buy directly from Polish producers according to his requirements. Mr. Bronek is reluctant to give details of his supply chains, but claims they are as short as possible, and that this implies freshness and no use of preservatives. For example, Mr. Bronek buys Polish white cottage cheese from a reputable small dairy, which has a sell-by date of two weeks from date of manufacture.

Mr. Bronek is acutely aware of the incursion into Poland by multinational agribusiness which aim to 'modernise' Poland by driving many of the nation's two million farming families off the land and replacing traditional farming with foreign-owned agribusiness. He says that tiny farming communities are now in a state of deep depression with farm prices artificially repressed by subsidised EU and US imports. Supermarkets are also on the increase. Sustainability for him is about becoming more regional, yet still globally connected, but Mr. Bronek doesn't yet believe his actions can have any great effect in changing things for the better.

* One of the suppliers to Bronek's Deli, Romek the baker, was also interviewed as part of the research for the London Food Link Bread street photography project in 2003. See Mel Barrett, "Bread Street: The British baking bloomer?" Sustain 2004.

Caterers International Ltd Feltham, West London

Who they are

Johnson Samuels set up Caterers International Ltd as a specialist business caterer employing nine people, with ethnic ties, in Feltham. The company started out four years ago as a manufacturer of South Indian ready meals and now earns income from catering for offices, business lunches and special events. They offer three services:

- temperature controlled delivery of lunches to companies employing more than 10 people, including buffet lunches for meetings;
- wholesale distribution of microwaveable ready meals to a number of private and public customers, including shops, schools, hotels, cafés, care homes, bars and clubs; and
- catering for special events such as weddings and religious and cultural events.

They use their own vans to deliver to businesses within a radius of approximately 25 miles, mostly to London.

The product

The company produces South Indian ready meals and desserts, sandwiches, pies, pastries, salads, fruit salads and snacks. Johnson Samuels feels that the strength of the business lies in its broad range of products and services, and the customer's confidence in those products. He was unwilling to reveal exactly

which menu items were made in the factory and which were bought in, but it is unlikely that the firm produces from scratch everything on the menu.

Vegetables and meat are bought from a local wholesaler, although not much was known about where the wholesaler bought his produce. The spices are bought from a local distributor importing from abroad. Caterers International is happy with its suppliers because each of them fulfils the company's HACCP* requirements, so suppliers would only be changed if this benefits the business.

Customers

The firm sells around 10,000 ready meals per month, which amounts to a turnover of approximately £20,000 per month. Their main business is to offices and smaller, independent retailers, such as Londis.

Plans

Caterers International is on the verge of expansion and has conducted research into tailoring products for retailers' own-label brands, as this is a market that the company would like to supply to. Being close to Heathrow Airport, they also feel they are in a good position to sell to foodservice companies supplying the airline industry with in-flight meals. They are a young company and recognise the need

to establish a reputation before approaching these markets, and are concerned about the "red tape" involved in becoming an accredited supplier. Mr Samuels felt the firm's expansion plans were hampered by the lack of available, well-trained staff, especially chefs.

They recently exhibited at the first UK Halal Exhibition and were keen for the opportunity to exhibit at more of these events as it gave them direct contact with potential customers.

Mr Samuels also expressed a need for more tailored support on business planning. He has sought help from business support organisations in the past, such as *Harrow in Business*, and *Business Link*, but found that they supply a lot of documents on strategy but little practical help with implementing the details relevant to his small business.

Sustainability

There was some confusion over the meaning of sustainable food. For example, Mr Samuels has not looked into fair trade and organic ingredients as he felt that his good relationship with suppliers meant that their supply chains were already accountable. Mr Samuel's only current motivation for using fair trade ingredients would be if they were cheaper.

However, Caterers International understands that customer preferences are always evolving and wants the products to reflect this. Mr Samuels did express a desire to buy meat directly from producers, for example, rather than from wholesalers, but felt that finding these producers would be a problem.

Mr Samuels was interested in ways that sustainable business practice could reduce operating costs. The firm uses local authority waste removal services and welcomed advice on how to minimise waste or use energy and water more efficiently. Though he felt that developing an environmental policy was not a priority issue for a small company, Mr Samuels welcomed any support.

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- * New UK food hygiene laws based on EU Regulations came into force on 1 January 2006. These require all food businesses including caterers, primary producers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers to be registered with their local authority. Businesses manufacturing meat, fish or egg products must undergo approval procedures. Businesses must demonstrate a food safety management system based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). HACCP is an internationally recognised system to ensure the production of safe food. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. Keeping records is an important part of HACCP systems.

FudCo Quality Products Willesden, Northwest London

Who they are

Mr Shah and his family come from Nairobi. Over 30 years ago he established FudCo to import, package and supply dry goods for the ethnic market. The company has a history of steady growth and expansion which increased rapidly in the last five years, yielding a turnover last year of approximately £5 million. The company used to have five employees and now has over forty, mostly South Indian and Turkish men from the local area. FudCo is a good employer and word has spread; every day several people approach the factory unit looking for work.

Fudco is now run by the founder's son, Sheilesh M. Shah, and has grown to be a major importer, packager and distributor of foodstuffs, specialising in milled flours, spices and dried fruit and nuts. The company operates from a packaging factory and wholesale distribution centre in Willesden, bulk storage units in Park Royal and a retail store in Wembley.

The product

FudCo's wholesale catalogue lists over 4,000 lines of FudCo brand and other branded products, including spices, pulses, Indian snack foods, herbal cosmetics and remedies based on ayurvedic medicine. FudCo chooses to package goods under its own name to retain ownership of the brand. They import by ship bulk containers of dry goods, mainly from India, China and Australia. Some products are bought

locally when the best product and service is offered; fine-milled chapatti flour packaged under FudCo brand is bought in bulk from Wright's Millers in Ponder's End.* Preferring to buy directly from growers and processors to get the best purchase price, FudCo gains a competitive advantage in the crowded London market for ethnic foods; they keep prices down for their customers while maintaining profit margins.

All auditing of processing and manufacturing factories abroad is carried out by Mr Shah but the system is not officially recognised by the British Retail Consortium (BRC). FudCo is working towards BRC accreditation to increase sales to national retailers, wholesalers and caterers.

Customers

The firm's customers are mostly London-based and include major multiples, cash & carries and large independent retailers. The firm uses three vans for distribution but sometimes contracts other vehicles, although they find using this service unreliable.

Customers find the firm through word of mouth and FudCo is now exporting products, although Mr Shah admitted he needed help understanding what procedures are required to export to non-EU countries, for example, in eastern Europe. He also welcomed the opportunity to exhibit at trade shows to reach new customers.

Mr Shah believes the supermarkets are crucial to FudCo's growth as he sees how the supermarkets' ethnic ranges are rapidly expanding to meet demand from London's increasing ethnic demographic. He believes that ethnic customers will abandon all but the most specialised independent retailers of ethnic goods for the convenience offered by supermarkets.

FudCo has been asked to package products under other retailers' brand names. FudCo is one of a few London companies accredited as a kosher supplier and all Tesco's kosher lines are packed by FudCo.

Plans

The factory has three lines of machinery to package goods. Each line requires at least five people to operate the machinery, from handling the loose product, detection of contaminants, packaging into plastic bags and then boxing of the finished product ready for distribution. Unfortunately, the factory is too small for all three lines to work at the same time and be correctly staffed. This means that a new packaging line worth £150,000 is not used efficiently, so Mr Shah is keen to move into bigger premises. However, he is currently unwilling to take the risk of moving into suitable premises because this would require capital investment of four to five million pounds. For ease of management, Mr Shah would like to keep the different parts of the business under one roof. When asked if he had considered moving out of London, Mr Shah emphasised FudCo's location as a major competitive advantage because of its ability to provide a responsive service to his customers.

Organic certification in India

Eleven inspection and certification agencies exist in India, accredited under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). This programme is run by the Indian government's Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established in 1986 to promote exports and develop the value of agricultural commodities and processed foods. APEDA identify new markets, provide support systems to exporters and manufactures and introduce new products to the international market. India currently exports nearly seven thousand tonnes of organic produce and has 2.5 million hectares of land under organic cultivation. Indocert, an internationally accredited inspection agency in Kerala, aims to provide reliable and affordable organic inspection and certification services to farmers, processors, input suppliers and traders all over India.

Promisingly, the specialist fish restaurant Yo Sushi is looking to FudCo to help with its plans to stock own-label healthy snack products (such as rice crackers, dried mango and wasabi peas) as an alternative to chocolate and crisps. This has led to similar inquiries from The Conran Group, Vue Cinemas, the major multiples and golf clubhouse caterers. FudCo does not produce snacks themselves and is now looking for local manufacturers of healthy snacks. To enter this emerging market, the firm will order small quantities at first, to keep investment in new lines at a controlled level. As Mr Shah acknowledges, *"If we want to grow we must increase our capacity to meet customer needs."*

Sustainability

Mr Shah welcomed advice on reducing the utility bills and waste disposal costs, such as the two tonnes of baled cardboard he pays to be removed every week.

However, when asked about packaging and distribution of organic goods, Mr Shah was not enthusiastic. He considered the process of gaining certification expensive and did not believe that the market existed, at least for the ethnic ranges that FudCo offers. Mr Shah knows of farms in India that have converted to organic growing within the last 5-10 years, but he does not think systems are in place to provide official accreditation (see box "Organic certification in India" on page 70). In fact, Indian organic production is more advanced than Mr Shah and many food manufacturers believe (see box).

* For more information on Wright's Millers, see Mel Barrett and Dan Keech, "Capital Eats - an Analysis of London's Food Economy" (Sustain: the alliance for better food & farming, 2004).

Gazebo Fine Foods Wembley, West London

Who they are

Tanoj Shah originates from Tanzania, East Africa. He is a businessman who likes cooking; whilst studying for his business degree at North-East London University, he served home-cooking to his friends, who made sure he never had to pay for his own beer down the pub!

Tanoj then entered the Graduate Enterprise Programme, organised by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) for young entrepreneurs, and was chosen as one of the best entrants. He was mentored by staff at British Petroleum and Arthur Anderson. Later, he attended Cranfield School of Management to carry out a feasibility study on a food manufacturing business.

He started small, making vegetarian savoury snacks in his home kitchen and selling them to businesses in Central London. Over fifteen months, Tanoj refined his products in response to rapidly growing numbers of customers. With this confidence in his product and market, in 1986 Tanoj and his sister established Gazebo Fine Foods in a small manufacturing unit at Wembley. They received advice from a local business support agency. Tanoj credits his success to the strong support he also received from family and friends.

Gazebo Fine Foods has grown into a business turning over £4 million per year. It employs 55 people at its 25,000 square foot production unit in Wembley, an area where Tanoj can find the skilled workers needed to handle delicate, handmade products. The location

also allows the company to provide a fast, responsive service to customers.

Staff commitment is achieved by creating a safe working environment and training that follows the 'Investors in People'* programme. Senior managers are encouraged to obtain national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in management and administration.[†] Through in-place training, production staff, who often do not possess any formal qualifications, gain skills in food and drink manufacture.

The product

Gazebo produces a range of chilled Indian, Chinese, Thai and Mexican savoury snacks. The products include items to be served as cocktail snacks, such as bite-size prawn toast, chicken empanadas eaten as a meal, and marinades for catering. The company buys large volumes of primary ingredients directly from growers and processors. Tanoj buys on quality and price and, as UK producers are often cheapest because of reduced transportation costs, he is interested in making more contacts with UK producers.

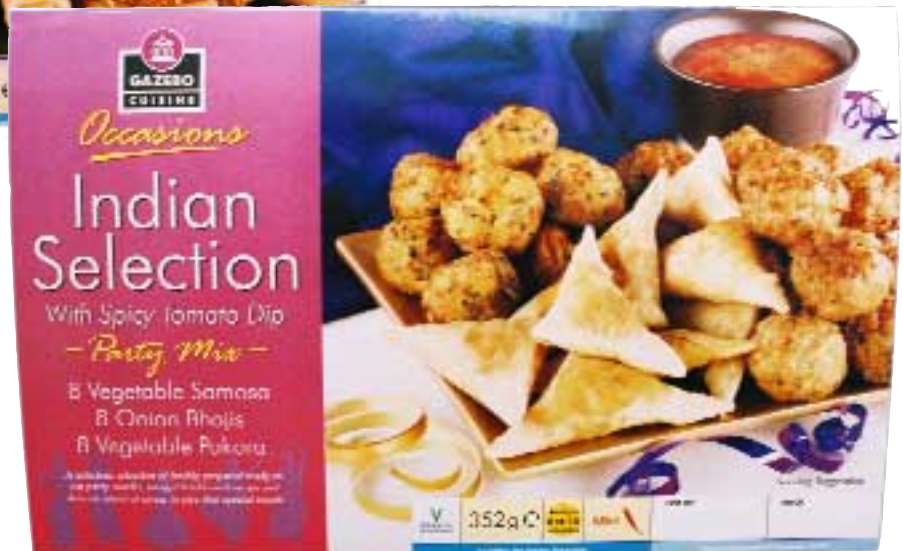
Tanoj worked with Watford College and Middlesex University to help with designing and branding the company's image and products. Tanoj's business training means that Gazebo grows by research, monitoring food trends and liaising with retailers and consumers to develop products that respond to customer needs.



"We have heavily invested in our NPD[†] facility to provide service to existing and potential customers."

Tanoj Shah,
Gazebo Fine Foods

Gazebo Fine Foods has accreditation to the British Retail Consortium (BRC) higher level (Grade A) and is approved to produce halal products for the large market represented by a growing Muslim population.



Customers

The products are packaged in a variety of formats to suit foodservice companies, convenience stores and the symbol multiples such as Spar, Nisa and Londis. Tanoj also saw an opportunity for Gazebo's products to be stocked by convenience stores at petrol stations for motorists eating meals on the road. This is a highly competitive sector, so the company undertook

research into the range of products currently sold. The research revealed that the market was fragmented with not much choice beyond sandwiches and pies.

Says Tanoj: *"To fill this niche, Gazebo Fine Foods created a range of hand held snacks with very attractive packaging and the name 'Grab and Go'."*

The company's products are distributed nationally by a network of frozen and chilled distributors - Kerry Foods Direct to Store.[§] For the chilled products to have maximum shelf life, Gazebo works on short lead times from a customer order to delivery into depot.

Plans

Tanoj is looking for a partner to expand the business and would like to sell chilled products in bulk to restaurants and frozen products to wholesalers. He is also trying to reduce the costs of distribution by finding a local distributor into London. The current national distributor takes Gazebo products to regional distribution hubs, from where the product is transported to customers.

Sustainability

Tanoj did investigate the possibility of developing a certified organic product, but decided that the market for organic processed foods is limited and not a priority for his customers. Tanoj concluded that the investment of time and money needed to clean the production line to achieve the strict product segregation requirements for organic certification was not worth it. He did suggest that he would reconsider if Gazebo had help with developing the marketing for an organic product.

However, the company does place great emphasis on staff training, market research and product development. All the education that skilled workers and senior management receive through various institutions could educate about sustainability as good business practice, but Tanoj reports that he has not

been encouraged by any business advisor to implement environmental policies in his business.

- * The Investors in People Standard is a method designed to improve an organisation's performance through its people. It was developed in 1990 by the National Training Task Force in partnership with leading businesses and national organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Trade Union Congress. Investors in People UK is funded by the Department for Education and Skills.
- † Training is brokered by ABi Associates Limited, a business development agency set up in Brent in 1995 to influence BAME business. Their programme for improving the skills of employers and employees, SEEP, is funded by the Learning & Skills Council and the European Social Fund.
- ‡ In business and engineering, new product development (NPD) is the complete process of bringing a new product to market, from idea generation to commercialisation. This process involves two parallel aspects: product engineering and marketing analysis.
- § Kerry Foods Direct to Store (KFDTs) is the major supplier of foods to the chilled cabinets of independent convenience stores. This widely used distribution service combines a national delivery network operating from centres in Manchester and Swindon, with well-known brand names and the facility to order single units of popular snack foods. This service allows food manufacturing companies to sell to independent stores whose owners may be unwilling to take the risk of spending money, and devoting shelf space, to large volumes of newly marketed products.

The London Tea Company Finchley, North London

"Our sustainable business practice extends beyond the product to include the way London Tea's product is packaged. We want to better the whole industry."

Dinuk Dissanayake, Managing Director, The London Tea Company

Who they are

Dinuk Dissanayake's family established The London Tea Company seven years ago as a response to what they saw of the tea industry in their native Sri Lanka. Dinuk's aim is to be a Sri Lankan-owned company that is responsible to farmers, labourers and the environment back home.

The product

Dinuk grew frustrated at the multinationals and their mass-produced, cheap, low-quality tea. His aim was to establish and market a brand of tea that promoted the distinctive flavours of Sri Lankan tea, each characteristic of the climate, soil and elevation of its regional origin. As the London Tea Company's marketing explains: *"Cultivated in the misty mountains of Sri Lanka and nourished by the cool mountain climate, Ceylon teas are distinctive in taste."*

The company buys tea grown on estates listed on Sri Lanka's Fairtrade register.[‡] The Fairtrade mark communicates to the consumer that the farmers have received more than market price for their product. A proportion of this premium is invested in a fairly

managed fund, used by tea workers to meet community needs ranging from education to healthcare. Fairtrade also means that growers can afford to practice environmentally sustainable farming to maintain biodiversity and preserve natural resources for future generations.

The tea is then blended and packaged on the estate to the London Tea Company's requirements. All the ingredients - teas, fruits, herbs and spices - are grown organically in Sri Lanka and certified by the Soil Association. The ranges include classic teas for British tastes and a gourmet range of blended black and green teas that incorporate exotic flavourings such as cinnamon, cloves and sweet chilli.

Customers

The company currently sells directly and through distributors to specialist food stores, caterers and faith groups. The firm finds small orders costly to fulfil because the unit price of a packet of tea is too low to justify postage, so they try to encourage their clients to buy in bulk or co-operatively in order to share an order.



Eye-catching packaging makes London Tea attractive to independent retailers.

Plans

When told about plans for a sustainable London food hub, as outlined in the Mayor's new London Food Strategy, Dinuk was very encouraged by the prospect of reaching more London customers without increasing distribution costs. He does not wish to sell to supermarkets. However, the company would like to expand their range so that distributors find it more cost effective to promote London Tea Company products. Dinuk has tried to sell to second-tier suppliers of councils in fair trade boroughs, but found the tendering process complex and too time-consuming to justify the return in revenue.

"Without conscience every moral mankind has ever conceived disintegrates into thin air. Our emphasis on ensuring that every person in the chain receives their fair share, means our Fairtrade label is well-earned and justly shown-off."

London Tea Company website,
www.londontea.co.uk

Sustainability

Dinuk's aim to practice business sustainably, "extends beyond the product to include to way London Tea's product is packaged. We want to better the whole industry." The London Tea Company has approached environmental issues with an impressive attention to detail. Each box is hand-folded using the art of origami, eliminating the need for adhesives and artificial packaging. Each tea bag is made from a biodegradable plastic sachet, free of strings, tags and staples, thereby reducing unnecessary waste, and is oxygen treated, rather than chlorine bleached. The company does not produce paper-based promotional material, thereby reducing marketing costs and minimising waste.

* Oxfam, "The Tea Market - a background study", (Oxfam, 2002)

† The Pesticides Action Network website is at: www.pan-uk.org

‡ The Fairtrade registers are lists of producer co-operatives and other organisations approved by Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO), an umbrella body of independent national initiatives including the UK's Fairtrade Foundation. Companies wishing to use the Fairtrade mark on their products must buy from these registered producers.

The tea industry in Sri Lanka

Oxfam's 2002 study of the tea market* reveals that Sri Lanka is the largest tea exporter in the world, exporting about 295 million kilograms of tea in 2001. More than half the tea crop in Sri Lanka is produced by small farmers, while the other half is dominated by a few multinational companies.

Multinationals are present at all stages of the journey of tea, from tea bush to tea bag. These companies operate a deliberate policy of reducing differences in tea quality so that regional characteristics become exchangeable and tea can be bought wherever it is cheapest. Multinationals have such large purchasing power that they can influence the demand, and price, for particular qualities and types of tea. However, this cheap commodity is gained at the expense of Sri Lanka's tea workers and its environment. The labour costs of growing and picking tea represent nearly 60% of the total cost of production, yet the proportion of a labourer's wage in the retail price of tea is shockingly low.

Tea is grown in monoculture, which reduces biodiversity. In the absence of other plants to maintain the ecological balance, intensive use of pesticides and fertilisers is often needed to protect the plants against pest infestation and to increase yield. The campaign and policy group Pesticides Action Network has identified tea as one of the top ten problem crops for pesticide use around the world.†

M&R Superfresh, New Spitalfields Market, East London

Who they are

Mr. Rashid is from Pakistan. Sixteen years ago he started M&R Superfresh, a primary wholesaler at New Spitalfields Market (see box) with another partner, who has since left the business. The company wholesales exotic fruit and vegetables, specialising in the African and Afro-Caribbean market. M&R Superfresh trades from a large stand in the Market Hall which it moved into six months ago. It also rents a storage unit across the aisle from the

stand. M&R Superfresh employs 10 people, all of whom live in the borough of Waltham Forest or in nearby Essex.

Imran Patel is a director, buyer and salesman for M&R Superfresh. Imran joined M&R as a young man and proved himself as a motivated and loyal employee. His boss looked after him, loaning him money to buy a new car, put down a deposit for a house and ultimately rewarding Imran with a directorship three years ago. Imran believes New

New Spitalfields Market

The City of London owns and runs four famous markets, Billingsgate, Leadenhall, Smithfield and Spitalfields. Operating under a Royal Charter granted in 1682, Spitalfields moved out of the City in 1991 and now occupies a purpose-built 31-acre site in Leyton, East London. The site benefits from being close to the motorway network and ports, and far from residential development.

New Spitalfields Market has the highest number of wholesale traders of any horticultural market in the United Kingdom. The Market Hall houses more than 100 trading units for wholesalers dealing in fruit, vegetables and flowers. According to traders' requirements, units are equipped with facilities such as cold storage rooms, ripening rooms and racking for pallets of produce.

Mike Culverwell, former superintendent of the Market, reports that over 80 % of the Market's produce is sold to ethnic community food businesses. While most traditional vegetables are UK grown, at least 20 per cent of vegetables and 80 per cent of fruit is trucked or flown in from abroad. Mike believes the increasing specialisation by wholesalers in exotic fruit and vegetables provides the greatest choice of these products of any market in Europe and contributes to New Spitalfield Market being the most successful UK market.

Spitalfields is the best London wholesale market.

The product

M&R Superfresh has only one buyer, which is unusual for a business of its size, so Imran uses brokers for the produce he does not import himself. Imran's relationships with the company's suppliers have been built over years. Suppliers know from experience M&R's storage capacity, sales volume and historical pattern of buying.

Imran's imports of speciality produce from Ghana, Uganda and the USA serve Afro-Caribbean and African customers in Brixton, Lewisham and Dalston, who represent 60 per cent of M&R's turnover. The company employs an agent at Heathrow airport who clears produce through customs & excise and pays all import duties and transport costs. These freight charges constitute the majority of an item's cost to M&R Superfresh. The company makes a better profit margin on

"Sweetcorn season lasts only four months. First it comes from Morocco, then France, then England in August. We'll order six to seven pallets of English sweetcorn and sell it all."

Imran Patel, Director and Buyer,
M&R Superfresh



New delivery of Essex-grown corn waiting to be unloaded

The value of seasonal food

There is growing consumer demand for more seasonal and local food. Two-thirds of consumers say they are trying to buy more seasonally, according to the Institute of Grocery Distribution.* As the National Consumer Council (NCC) has noted, "seasonal food can offer better taste and be more affordable, while local food can deliver freshness, reduce food miles, offer benefits to local farmers and communities and help reconnect consumers with where their food comes from".

In research published in tandem with this report, London Food Link[†] has identified seasonal food as a market opportunity for restaurants and caterers, helping food companies to enliven menus and use the freshest, tastiest produce, and linking such produce to positive marketing messages based on food provenance. Seasonality is also becoming an important consideration for public sector caterers interested in sustainable food. For ethnic caterers, restaurants and retailers, seasonality is also likely to offer food quality and marketing benefits, as well as supporting sustainability. However, such advice may be less relevant for ethnic food manufacturers who need to supply a consistent year-round product.

There are now many ways to find out when certain varieties of fruit, vegetables, fish and meat are in season. On the web, seasonality information can be found at: www.eattheseasons.co.uk; www.rivercottage.net; www.bbc.co.uk/food/in_season. In print, we suggest Paul Waddington's book "Seasonal Food; a guide to what's in season when and why" is published by Eden Project Books (2004) and Sustain's "Good food on the public plate: A manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering," published by Sustain, see: www.sustainweb.org/pubslst.php.

"Seasonal items get the customer excited. You don't want to have seasonal stuff all year round. People get fed up. Seasonal is only around for a short time. That's why people want it."

Imran Patel, Director and Buyer,
M&R Superfresh

produce that Imran imports himself rather than buying through a broker.

Imran's years of experience, and knowledge of seasonality in producer countries, dictate whether he sells a product below cost, because of over-supply at the market, or at a premium because he is the only one selling a sought-after product. However, Imran's priority is maintaining good relationships with his customers. So, if a particular vegetable is ropey but cheap because it is coming to the end of its season in

one country, Imran will find better quality, but more expensive, mid-season produce from another country.

Imran has seen the wholesale business change in the last few years. Customers want to reduce the number of their suppliers and are increasingly demanding that fresh produce wholesalers meet all their needs.

"I've got to have a little bit of everything because that's what the customer wants. You can't specialise in one produce variety, for example, salad. You must stock popular items like apples, bananas, and oranges even though they are not your speciality."

Imran Patel, Director and Buyer,
M&R Superfresh

He makes a better profit margin on specialist products that are bought direct from the producer or distribution agent. Imran does not specialise in typical British produce such as swede or broccoli. He has accounts with other market stallholders so that he can fulfil all his customers' needs, even though it may reduce his profit margin.

Customers

M&R's customers are independent chains of grocery stores, high volume greengrocers and secondary suppliers of produce that sell on to small shops and restaurants. Customers place their orders by phone in the evening. Early the next morning, vans file into the market to collect the orders picked by Imran's staff. The pickers know from experience at what time

each customer will collect, the make of van and even the customer's preferred parking space, so that the pallet may be delivered by forklift truck directly to the customer's van, with the minimum of delay.

Some small, local shop owners and restaurateurs will come to the stand at the end of the morning, at about 8am, to get a bargain. However, Imran is aware that the relationship between companies along the supply chain is what keeps the chain strong. He cannot undermine the business of his customers, the secondary suppliers, and so does not offer prices much cheaper.

Sustainability

Although the company has no formal policy on sustainability, there is one aspect in which it excels. It is Imran's job to have an acute awareness of what produce is in season where. He then communicates this seasonal supply to his customers in terms of high or low prices. Imran will always buy English grown potatoes and red and white onions because of their superior quality and relatively stable price. He also buys specialist, greenhouse-grown Chinese leaves from Valley Produce, in Reading, because of the quality and freshness of the produce. He believes Valley Produce are onto a good thing because, by meeting the demand of a specialist market accustomed to paying higher prices for air-freighted produce, Valley Produce are able to make a good margin.

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- * Institute of Grocery Distribution, "Connecting consumers with farming and food produce" (2005)
 - † www.londonfoodlink.org

NamaYasai Lewes, East Sussex

Who they are

Robin Williams and Ikuko Suzuki established NamaYasai (Japanese for 'raw vegetables') in 2005 as 'natural agriculture' growers of a range of Japanese vegetables and herbs. The company is still very small, with an annual turnover of £6,000 and only one acre of land.

The product

Based in Lewes, in East Sussex, it grows an extensive range of over forty varieties of Japanese crops, including shiso (beefsteak plant) leaves for sashimi (a method of serving fish), shungiku leaves (a type of chrysanthemum), mizuna salad leaves, edamame (fresh soybeans), myoga (Japanese ginger) and daikon (oriental radish). Almost all the seeds and root stocks are brought from Japan. It also grows more familiar Western herbs such as lovage, lemon balm, angelica, and myrrh. No pesticides and no artificial fertilisers are used, and although these methods result in a shorter growing season, NamaYasai says that the taste is "second to none".

Customers

NamaYasai supplies vegetables and salads to restaurants and shops in the Lewes and Brighton area. All produce is picked on the day of delivery and labelled with the date of harvest so that customers

know exactly how fresh their purchase is. This often means harvesting by torchlight from 2 or 3am. To keep down costs and (perhaps surprisingly) for speed, all orders are currently delivered by bicycle, using a trailer if necessary.

It also sells at farmers' markets in Lewes, Brighton and Hove. These markets are not only a good chance to meet customers and an excellent source of sales, but also frequently yield new weekly orders from professional chefs. In its first year NamaYasai sold crops from late April until October, after which the owners traveled to Japan on a six-week agricultural study tour.

NamaYasai's original intention was to sell produce in London, to meet the needs of the Japanese population and an anticipated growing taste by Europeans for Japanese food. However, most crops are still on trial and until the owners are sure which Japanese varieties can survive in East Sussex and how long the season of supply will be, they consider it prudent to work with local customers who do not insist on a guaranteed supply. Nevertheless, numerous enquiries and requests for supply have already been received from restaurants and wholesalers in London.

Plans

In 2006 it is testing tonburi leaves (land caviar), ashitaba leaves (angelica), udo (Japanese asparagus) and fuki (Japanese sweet coltsfoot) among many other varieties. Trials of safflower are also being conducted



Japanese crops growing at NamaYasai: top left and right, soba (Japanese buckwheat); bottom, red shiso leaves (beefsteak plant); centre, kabocha (Japanese pumpkin).



for a possible source of vegetable cooking oil. Spelt wheat is a winter option for producing a local flour. NamaYasai has tripled the amount of land they cultivate by renting land from a local landowner but has found it difficult to secure more land for growing because Defra's complex farming regulations appear to be a disincentive for busy farmers to rent out land. Robin and Ikuko are learning their skills by trial and error, but would dearly like to find a local farmer who can act as a mentor and advise on the next step - mechanisation.

Sustainability

As well as growing their produce in a sustainable way, NamaYasai is also looking for an affordable and sustainable solution to the problem of transporting produce to the London market. It has estimated that a return trip using the company van would cost at least £30 in fuel and congestion charge, plus a further £30 in wages, quite apart from the environmental cost. Another consideration as it expands is whether to use tractors or animals to plough and sow the fields; if using tractors, it would want to make its own biodiesel but nothing is ruled out - years ago oxen were a common sight on local farms! For most restaurants, price is the most important factor in choosing a fresh produce supplier so, to compete effectively against imports, every farm and distribution cost has to be examined closely.

Oasis Catering Brent, West London

Who they are

Oasis is a catering company cooking halal* food on site for two schools, serving about 400 lunches per day. The company employs eight people, including the owner Ahmed Elguenuni, his wife Fatima and his son. Ahmed came to Britain from Morocco in his teens and has worked in hospitality and catering, particularly hotels, all his life. Ahmed's Muslim faith is important to him. His work, that of providing wholesome, halal food for children, is motivated by the Arabic term *barakah*, which may be described as one's actions that contribute to the greater good and, in doing so, receive Allah's blessing.

The product

The Oasis menu includes three meals, including a vegetarian option of pulses and beans. The meals are low in fat and salt, feature lots of fruit and vegetables and always include a raw salad. Everything is made from scratch with fresh ingredients. Menu items may include saffron flavoured basmati rice, spicy lamb meatballs in a tomato-based sauce and a vegetarian fusilli pasta salad.

Oasis rents the kitchen at Islamia Primary School in Brent,[†] Oasis' first customer, where most of the raw ingredients are prepared before being cooked the next day. Every day Ahmed buys all the primary ingredients himself. He and his son buy fresh items from his favourite shops in Ealing Road, Wembley, while dry goods are bought from Bestway cash and

carry. Suppliers are chosen first on price, then on quality; lamb and chicken are bought from two different halal butchers in Ealing Road so Ahmed can get the best price, and the usually expensive Himalayan basmati rice is cheaper because Ahmed buys broken rather than whole grains. Ahmed supervises the chefs at Islamia in the morning, then travels to Anson Primary School, Oasis' second customer in Brent, just in time to approve all the food ready for lunch service. The school children sit at communal tables in a dining room and the chefs serve up lunch on china plates.

Customers

Jeff Smith is the Head Teacher at Anson. His school used to be part of Brent Council's contract with the national catering company Scolarest,[‡] which provided food to fifty-six schools. Mr Smith was unhappy with the quality of food and the number of meals left unfinished by pupils. On a Head Teachers' visit to nearby Islamia primary school in September 2003, Mr Smith ate lunch with the students. He was impressed by the quality of the food and the social, orderly environment of Islamia's lunch room. After consulting with the school governors, Mr Smith opted out of Brent Council's school food contract and, after a tendering process to contract a high quality school caterer, hired Oasis Catering to provide school meals in September 2004, the beginning of the following school year. To support this change, the Chair of governors, Tracie Desmond, organised the installation

of a school kitchen and repainted the lunchroom in bright and cheery colours.

It was important for Mr Smith to serve the cultural and religious needs of his pupils, the majority of whom come from an ethnic background. Over a third of the children are Muslim but none are Sikh.[§] Since Oasis Catering took over the catering contract, the number of meals eaten by school children has increased by 30%. Anson's multi-cultural children are accustomed to the varied food now served at lunch; dishes that might be unfamiliar to some children are well known by others, which encourages discussion and an adventurous spirit. Mr Smith observes that lunchtime is now a well-mannered and social occasion for the children. Parents are invited to join in once a month.

The school benefits from its relationship with a small business. Oasis is responsive to suggestions or complaints and as a client, Mr Smith feels he is in an equitable relationship that gives him control over the quality of service that Oasis provides. "*I need him and he needs me,*" explains Mr Smith. He also likes the fact that Anson's suppliers can reflect the diversity of the school population and local area.

Plans

Oasis Catering has been asked to provide school meals for three other Brent schools. Its biggest challenge is recruiting trained cooking staff to work in school kitchens. Ahmed is unsure of the correct recruitment process, such as where to advertise for staff, or where to send new staff on basic hygiene courses. He is considering bringing qualified chefs

from Morocco but is intimidated by immigration procedures. However, as he comments, "*We must recruit to expand the business.*"

Sustainability

Ahmed is keen to provide the best service he can to the school children who eat his meals. As his business expands, Ahmed is willing to work with London Food Link to make relationships with local growers that lead to Oasis using more local produce in its catering.

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- * Halal means permitted, allowed, lawful or legal. In relation to food and drink, it means that the food or drink is permitted for consumption by Muslims. Islamic dietary laws define what food and drink is halal. Meat from halal animals, such as cow, sheep, chicken and turkey, must be slaughtered according to Islamic law to be suitable for consumption.
 - † Islamia Primary School was founded in 1983 by Yusuf Islam (formerly known as the singer Cat Stevens). It is a co-educational, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual primary school, providing education in a secure Islamic environment through the application of the Qu'ran (Islam's holy book) and Sunnah (the ideals of how to live, as demonstrated by the life of Prophet Mohamed). In 1990, Islamia became the first Muslim school in the UK to be granted government funding.
 - ‡ Scolarest is a private catering company offering foodservice to 2,500 schools, colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom. www.scolarest.co.uk
 - § Sikhs do not believe in ritualised forms of slaughter. They try not to eat meat that has been slaughtered according to religious dietary laws.

Organic India Enfield, Northeast London

Who they are

Yasmeen and Mamun Rashid founded Organic India in 2000. They manufacture and market high-quality ethnic, chilled, organic ready meals and accompaniments for private label, retail and foodservice. The company employs 61 people in their production factory in Enfield, which has achieved British Retail Consortium and Soil Association accreditation.

The product

Organic India's range of organic Indian chilled ready meals is the largest in the UK, and features restaurant quality meat and vegetarian dishes. Unusually for Indian ready meals, the company's own-brand organic dishes, including lemon chicken korma, kabuli chana chicken and lamb Hindustani, use expensive ingredients such as whole meat portions and lamb.

Organic India aims to buy all the primary ingredients directly from UK farms. Organic lamb is bought from Wales, except in the first few months of the year,

"Customers increasingly demand top quality ready meals which are as good at home as restaurant meals eaten in a sophisticated environment."

Yasmeen Rashid, Managing Director,
Organic India

when British lamb supplies are at a seasonal low. Organic chicken,* potatoes and carrots are from Norfolk. When the company is unable to buy direct because of poor quality or availability, it will sometimes buy produce through an agent or wholesaler of imported produce.

The company is proud of the quality and superiority of its fresh ingredients, which feature prominently on their own brand of packaging.

Customers

The company has over twenty customers for Organic India brand and retailer's own brand including Asda, Budgens, Sainsbury's and Waitrose, and Debenhams for food service. In 2003, Organic India was chosen to manufacture under licence the Duchy Originals range of traditional British organic ready meals.

Plans

Organic India views public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, as a potential market for their products. However, the food budget given to schools and hospitals is very low and these institutions often cannot afford to buy organic products. Mamun Rashid suggests that ethnic food businesses might be more open to buying local, organic and fair-trade ingredients if food procurement for the public sector set an example.

Sustainability

Organic India was founded because the Rashids could see that the growing demand for organic food had extended to high-quality ready meals that respond not only to consumers' busy lifestyles, but also their concerns about health and the environment.

The London Food board

London Food is funded by and based at the London Development Agency. The board of London Food has worked closely with regional and local agencies, businesses and voluntary sector groups to produce the London Food Strategy for regional implementation of the government's Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy (see section 2 of this report). More details, including membership of the board, can be found at: www.lda.gov.uk/londonfood



Eric Schlosser (author of *Fast Food Nation*), Ken Livingstone and Jenny Jones launch the London Food Strategy

The company has environmental policies in place to ensure that the ready meals are produced in a sustainable, ethical way. These policies are communicated to employees at their induction. The policies seem to describe an ideal practice that the company aspires to, but is not always able to achieve. Mr Rashid explained they endeavour to use recycled packaging but only when cost permits, as this does make their product more expensive and affects the company's competitiveness.

Mr Rashid believes Organic India is trying to be a sustainable business in a very competitive market.[†] He would welcome more support to grow the business, such as subsidised loans and tax incentives that recognised the sustainability achievements and aspirations of his company.

Mr Rashid volunteers his time to address issues of how to make it easier for companies like Organic India to practise business more sustainably, to buy more local, organic and fair trade food. He is a member of the London Food board (see box) and was appointed leader of a working group on distribution and infrastructure.

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- * The Soil Association's 2005 organic market report uses import data collected by the British Retail Consortium on behalf of Defra. It reveals that the UK is virtually self-sufficient in supplies of organic chicken, and that the percentage of organic lamb bought from UK sources increased from 76% in 2003 to 89% in 2004.
 - † Since writing this case study, Mamun Rashid has withdrawn from supplying major multiple retailers. Mr Rashid was unable to protect his brand of restaurant-quality meals from being sold as a commodity alongside much cheaper ready meals. His new business, Tuck Home Delivery, now focuses on supplying the growing market for foodservice and using information technology to cultivate a more profitable, home-delivery service directly to his customer.

Port Royal Patties Company Willesden, Northwest London

"We hope that one day the Jamaican patty is as popular with the British as they are with Jamaicans back home."

Edward Johnston, Director, Port Royal Patties Company

Who they are

In 2001, Kingstonian Edward Johnston established Port Royal Patties in Willesden, north-west London, producing patties made to recipes developed in Kingston in association with Mother's Enterprises in Jamaica. The firm now has an annual turnover of £1.2 million and currently employs 24 people, most of whom live in north-west London but originally came from Jamaica. The factory has a range of quality assurance systems in place, including full HACCP procedures and has achieved STS* and BRC † accreditation.

The product

The factory produces over 10,000 patties per day in two sizes and six flavours - halal spicy beef, halal lamb, halal chicken, vegetable (accredited by the Vegetarian Society), salt fish and African meat pie. All meat is accredited by the Halal Food Authority. Port Royal patties are mainly sold baked and chilled, but they are also sold frozen and unbaked for bake-off by food service companies.

Some ingredients are British such as beef, chicken and halal lamb from the Midlands. All the dry goods are bought from dry goods wholesalers; Carl Fisher,

production supervisor, reports that flour is from Rank Hovis,† milled in Southampton. Spices such as Jamaican thyme and Scotch bonnet peppers are bought from an importer that ships them from Jamaica. Mark says he looks for reliable, consistent suppliers.

Customers

The company is expanding its market and moving into the retail sector by selling, through distributors, individually wrapped and branded product carrying the Port Royal name. The company recently exhibited at the food industry's premier show, the International Food Exhibition (IFE), held in London's Docklands where the patties were well received.

Port Royal Patties uses four delivery vans for sales to North Middlesex hospital, a number of delicatessens, restaurants, takeaways, mobile snack units in London and distributors north of London. It also exports to Sweden, Holland and Germany.

Through its presence at Business Link for London's 2004 Food Fair, an event for small food manufacturers to showcase their products to potential buyers, the company was supported to pass Asda's audit to supply 50 stores nationwide. It currently supplies five



Cellulose packaging film on a roll



Golden Jamaican patties

local Asda stores, Tesco at Brent Park and is talking to Sainsbury's about a possible supply contract.

Plans

Port Royal Patties is trying to find investment to move into a bigger production unit to increase the number of patties manufactured per day. This will decrease the unit cost per patty, allowing it to stay in the market and remain competitive with other food products, such as sandwiches, pasties and samosas, selling for under £5.

Sustainability

The firm currently has no formal policy or practice on sustainability. However it would welcome advice on lowering its overheads by minimising or trading waste and making more efficient use of water and energy.

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- * STS-Solutions plc offers food safety and health & safety consultancy services leading to certification of food products in the registered quality systems BRC Global Food Standard and ISO9001.
 - † In 1998 the British Retail Consortium, responding to industry needs, developed and introduced the BRC Food Technical Standard to be used to evaluate manufacturers of retailers' own brand food products. Regarded as the benchmark for good practice in the food industry, it evolved into a global standard used by many companies to assess the supply and manufacture of branded products.
 - ‡ Rank Hovis is part of the Bread Bakeries Division of RHM Group, one of the largest food companies in the UK. RHM brands include Hovis, Mr Kipling, Bisto and Elephant Atta flours for making chapattis.

Ummah Foods Ltd, Ilford, Essex

"As soon as we've achieved one (halal) standard, we've halved our potential market. There needs to be an umbrella body, then all the standards would be known to have achieved a certain level of compliance."

Khalid Sharif, Director Ummah Foods

Who they are

Khalid Sharif established Ummah Foods as a small, community-based company aiming to offer halal chocolates to the sweet-toothed UK Muslim community and also have a positive impact on the world. At every stage its stated aim is to follow Islam and help its community.

Its head office in Ilford employs three people and is essentially a marketing operation, while manufacture of the chocolate bars is contracted to a UK chocolate manufacturer, with whom they have a non-disclosure clause. Mr Sharif declined to discuss the reasons for the clause. It is presumed that, for Ummah Foods, non-disclosure protects the intellectual property of their halal monitoring process. For the manufacturing company, the clause protects them from being associated exclusively - maybe even disparagingly, in the current political climate - with serving the cultural needs of Muslims.

The product

In 2004, the company launched their first product, Ummah Caramel chocolate bar. This was supported by free sampling at East London mosques, Islamic centres and bookstores, an online promotion with The Hijab Shop (Ummah Caramel bar with each order!) and a commercial on the Islam TV channel. An orange flavoured variety was launched in December 2005 with packaging designed by a young Muslim artist who merged street graffiti with Arabic script.

A great deal of detailed supply chain auditing is needed because, in modern food manufacturing, even if a single ingredient is acceptable, it may have come into contact with something that is not. For example, a vegetarian ingredient may have been extracted, processed or filtered using animal fats or alcohol. Mr Sharif also needs to ensure that machinery cleaning processes do not use alcohol, and even make sure that the glue in the bar wrapper does not use animal fat.



This detailed monitoring needs considerable investment of time and money by the company, as no formal systems exist for monitoring the religious compliance of processed foods that do not ostensibly contain animal products. There are a number of UK halal monitoring authorities, including the Halal Food Authority (HFA) and Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC), which set criteria for accrediting the slaughter, distribution and processing of halal meat and poultry. In Mr Sharif's opinion, there are too many halal standards requiring too much money to be spent on accreditation.

Customers

Ummah chocolates are currently available in about 100 outlets nationwide, with customer orders ranging from one box per week to one box per month. It does all distribution itself, keeping it in touch with the Muslim community through direct contact with customers: small bookshops, grocers and newsagents in East London, mosques, youth centres, universities and hospitals and in UK cities with significant numbers of Muslims, namely, London, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Sheffield. Ummah chocolates were being trialled in selected Tesco stores in 2006 in anticipation of sales during the lunar month of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting.

Plans

Mr Sharif wants to run a sustainable company but has found it difficult to get business support. He signed up to the Mayor's "green procurement code" (see "Some practical support is already available" on page 34) because it didn't involve much work. However, free support from an environmental business support agency was unavailable as the agency's European Union funding stipulated only businesses in certain postcodes were eligible for support.

Ummah Foods would like to supply public sector and local authority catering services. Mr Sharif recently joined The Food Network (see Appendix II, "Where to get more help") for the opportunity to share information with other SME food manufacturers, to attend courses on reaching new markets such as supermarkets and foodservice and be part of The Food Network's brochure advertising small businesses.

"I am involved in charities and community projects so this drives my understanding of what is needed in the community, and I feel we can make a difference as long as we don't try to be everything to everyone from day one."

Khalid Sharif, Director Ummah Foods

Sustainability

Ummah chocolate is not certified as Fairtrade at the moment because of the investment required. Mr Sharif would like to investigate fair trade cocoa and sugar for future products but expressed doubt as to whether it should be a priority for his company. He went on to explain how his company addressed issues of importance to the Muslim community that arise from his contact with customers:

"Fairtrade certification is an aspiration of mine. But my main investment is in developing and monitoring halal systems. First priority are the issues of living in the UK; Bangladeshis and Pakistanis living in poverty; unemployed Muslim youth; treatment of old people and the homeless. There is a debate in the ethnic community that the 'fashion' in the media for promoting fair trade is displacing important issues on our doorstep. I am concerned with community issues, local issues and the local environment. I believe the role of business is to promote issues. I am using the marketing of chocolate to raise issues."

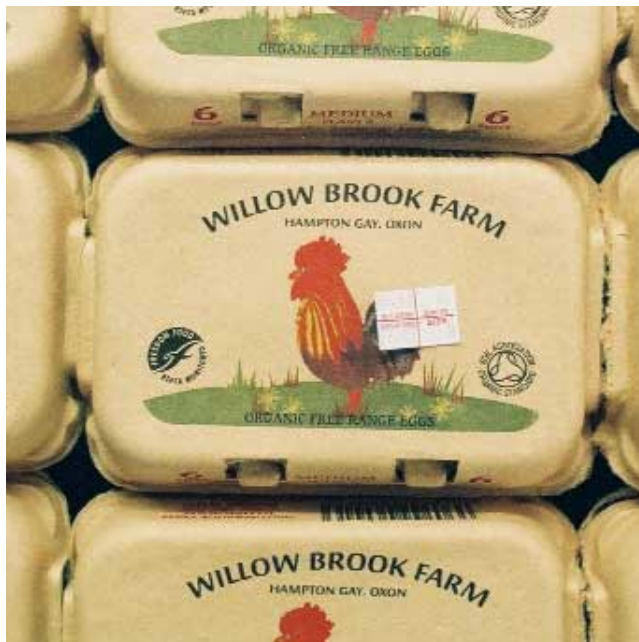
Khalid Sharif, Director Ummah Foods

As an example of this commitment, Ummah Foods' packaging is designed by young artists to encourage more Muslim youngsters to turn their creative abilities into commercial ones. Promotional materials and media for Ummah chocolates are used to raise awareness of Muslim charities, such as the Muslim Youth Helpline which supports young Muslims facing serious issues such as bullying, drug abuse, social problems or mental illness.

Willowbrook Farm Hampton Gay, Oxfordshire

Who they are

Five years ago, Ruby and Lutfi Radwan, both British Muslims, bought 43 acres of land in the beautiful countryside of Hampton Gay, Oxfordshire, set within the environmentally sensitive Cherwell Valley flood plain. Lutfi left his post lecturing in the School of Geography at Oxford University, the couple sold their house, and, with their six children, went to live in a caravan on their own patch of England. The caravan, sited by a brook feeding into the River Cherwell, was shaded by coppiced crack willows, so the Radwan's named their new home Willowbrook Farm.



The land had been part of a larger farm managed for intensive agriculture by the former owners (a large field of oilseed rape still lies on one of the farm's boundaries). This had degraded the fertility and biological activity of the soil and reduced the number of habitats able to support a wide variety of wildlife. As Ruby and Lutfi are environmentalists, they are committed to improving the land's natural biodiversity, maintaining high standards of animal welfare and promoting local food for local markets. The farm is now accredited for organic management by the Soil Association.

The Radwans are developing a variety of habitats on the farm with the help of volunteers from WWOOF* and several thousand native trees have been planted across one field to link up small areas of existing woodland. Hedgerows are being laid using traditional techniques and a silted up pond has been cleared and dredged.

The product

The Radwan's main income is from selling the eggs† of a small flock of 2,400 organically† reared Lohman Brown chickens. The chickens are housed in two mobile coops that are raised off the ground of a level field. This allows the chicken manure to drop through the floor grill and fertilise the soil underneath. The coops are periodically wheeled by tractor on to different quadrants of the field. Heat rising from the manure is insulated to help maintain the

temperature of the coop. The eggs are collected every day (this requires some hunting), checked for cracks and graded by hand: small eggs have large yolks and are laid by young chickens; extra large eggs contain more albumen (egg white) and are laid by older chickens; the "wobblies" have irregular, ridged shells and are highly prized by some customers at the farmers' market. The eggs are then stamped with the farm's organic producer code.⁵

The farm also organically rears slow-growing Cotswold Gold chickens for eating. The birds take about 16 weeks to reach maturity, when they are slaughtered according to halal religious rules at an abattoir in Warwick. At present, the Radwans are selling about 30 birds per week but have demand for many more. To make the business viable and meet customer demand, they plan to increase sales to 200 birds per week. Organically reared lamb is available seasonally from May to November as well as organic sheepskin rugs tanned at the only organic tannery in the UK, Organic Sheepskins in Hereford.

"By providing our produce at local markets and direct to the consumer we are able to provide freshness unequalled by produce in the high street."

Ruby Radwan, Willowbrook Farm

Customers

All eggs are sold directly to customers at the farm gate, at local markets, and delivered to local grocery stores, hotels and restaurants. The Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-op (OS&G) operates a scheme supporting regional growers and producers. The OS&G Co-op created a 'Local Harvest' range of local food that is available in 18 stores. Under this scheme, the Radwans supply about 300 dozen eggs to the local Co-op store each week.

The Radwans encourage people to visit the farm, either individually or as a large party, for example

A co-operative approach to promoting local food

The Mid Counties Co-operative grocery chain runs a programme to provide "a co-operative solution to the problems facing the farming and food industry throughout our area". By promoting locally grown produce, it supports local farmers, helps protect local jobs and reduces its customers' impact on the environment. At participating Co-op stores, local produce is highlighted by a 'Local Harvest' sign on the shelf. A minimum of 80% of the product must have come from local sources. Locally manufactured products may use ingredients from outside the area if at least 80% of the work has been carried out by local people.

For more information, see: www.midcounties.coop/live/welcome.asp?id=2043
and: www.convenience-store.co.uk/articles/21159/Harvest-festival.aspx



through the London Islamic Network for the Environment, and get involved in activities ranging from tree planting to willow weaving and bird hide building. They are keen to offer town-dwellers the experience of helping on a farm and learning first-hand about organic techniques.

Plans

Ruby and Lufi are submitting an application to Cherwell District Council to remain resident on their land.** To do this, they must prove that they have a viable business, which has been a struggle. This is not only because of the difficulty of making a living in agriculture, in general, coupled with the challenges of converting to organic standards, but also because some local residents have not understood what the Radwans are trying to do. Indeed, some local residents have objected to a previous planning application from the farm because they feared that a chicken farm would cause environmental damage.

Undaunted, Ruby and Lutfi plan to increase the viability of the farm by offering customers a greater variety of organic produce. They have started to grow vegetables for their own use and will eventually convert some fields to horticulture.

"We believe the future of British farming lies in reconnecting farmers and consumers to the land...we support educational and other initiatives aimed at raising environmental awareness particularly concerning farming issues."

Ruby and Lutfi Radwan, Willowbrook Farm

Sustainability

Environmental, social and economic sustainability have been integral to this business from the very start. The Radwans' aim is to restore the vitality of the soil and habitats within the boundaries of Willowbrook Farm, even if, as Lutfi concedes, this may take them a lifetime. For Ruby and Lutfi, owning and managing an environmentally sustainable farm is the fullest expression of their desire to lead a sustainable life.

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- * World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) is an international organisation that connects organic farmers with volunteers wanting experience on organic farms. www.wwoof.org.
 - † The Soil Association reports that organic egg sales are a key growth area and in some areas of the UK, most notably the South East, organic producers are able to demand a significant premium. The British Egg Information Service (BEIS) estimates that the retail market for organic eggs was worth £17 million in 2004, approximately 3% of the market.
 - ‡ EU guidelines for organic chickens and their feed are stringent. The pullets must be raised by certified organic production methods from birth. Laying pullets are required to have outdoor access all year round, or be fed sprouted grains for the period when indoors and all feed must be certified organic. The land that the poultry range on must be organic. No antibiotics or meat by-products are allowed in the feed and each bird is required to have 2 square feet of floor space. www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic.
 - § In January 2004, EU legislation was put in place to ensure the stamping of every egg with a best before date, and codes denoting the home address, producer code and country of origin.
 - ** Since writing this case study, Lutfi and Ruby's application to build a house on their land has been approved by Cherwell District Council. Plans are now underway.

Winner Foods Tottenham, Northeast London

Who they are

Winner Foods has been operating in Tottenham, Haringey since 1993. It is run by seven partners, all from China. The company employs 27 staff, most of whom live in Haringey, and produces 30 tonnes of noodles per week - making them one of the top five noodle manufacturers in the UK.

The product

Winner Foods specialise in fresh, frozen and dried Oriental noodles, and pastry for dumplings and wonton (dumplings often made from egg-noodle dough). The ingredients for these products (mainly wheat flour and pasteurised eggs) are supplied locally and UK grown; the products also contain water, colouring and preservative. For the last eight months, Managing Director, Mr Ming Sham, has bought 18 tons of wheat flour per week directly from a miller in Edmonton, just north of Tottenham. Fifteen litres of pasteurised eggs arrive three times per week from Deans Foods egg processing plant in Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Deans says that it "has the ability to produce approved RSPCA, Soil Association and Vegetarian Society products", although the company also sells egg products from caged birds.*

Customers

Products are delivered by Winner's vans to customers in London and south east England, while distributors supply across the UK, France, Spain, Belgium and Holland.

Customers include medium-sized Chinese wholesalers, supermarkets, restaurants and take-aways, who buy Winner's 'Earth Brand' label or products marketed under their own label.

Plans

Winner Foods is developing a range of fresh noodles attractively packaged to appeal to consumers outside of the Chinese community. The range highlights the creative experience of cooking with a wide variety of authentic noodles.

Sustainability

Winner Foods does not have a sustainable business policy, but buys all of its ingredients from UK growers and processors. Mr Sham's main concern is to look for high quality produce at a good price. He is aware of the increasing consumer market for organic foods but is wary of the money and time required to gain Soil Association accreditation. The company is already investing significant sums of money to gain BRC accreditation that will help the company increase sales to supermarkets.

* The Deans Foods website is at: www.deansfoods.co.uk

Red shiso leaves
growing at NamaYasai










Appendices




Appendix I: Faith and ecology

This section outlines the basics of each faith's history, beliefs and teachings on ecology.

The information in this appendix is adapted from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC, www.arcworld.org). ARC was founded in 1995 by Prince Philip. It is a secular organisation working with eleven faiths worldwide, representing the major religions of the world, to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices.

Religion	How the beliefs embodied by each religion can relate to ecological behaviour
<div>Baha'i</div> <div></div>	The world reflects the qualities and attributes of God, and should therefore be greatly respected and cherished. It is truly possible both to meet the needs of present and future generations and to build a sound foundation for social and economic development. 'The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.'
<div>Buddhism</div> <div></div>	Caring for the environment begins with caring for oneself. If one treats nature as a friend and teacher, one can be in harmony with other creatures and appreciate the interconnectedness of all that lives because all beings are connected. Meditation enables one to be aware of the effects of one's actions, including those destructive to the environment. Mindfulness and clear comprehension are at the heart of Buddhist meditation. Peace is realised when people are aware of each and every step.
<div>Christianity</div> <div></div>	To recognise that all creatures and objects have a unique place in God's creation and to conserve and work for the honour of creation both for its inherent value to God and in order that justice may be achieved and sustained. All of creation is the loving action of God, who willed the creation and continues to care for all aspects of existence, and it is humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation.
<div>Daoism</div> <div></div>	Humanity must try to balance the opposites of Heaven and Earth. Humanity follows the Earth, the Earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Dao, and the Dao follows what is natural. The energy of life is created when Yin and Yang reach harmony. One who understands this point will not exploit nature, but will treat it well and learn from it. Greedy human desire will lead to the over-exploitation of natural resources therefore humans should help everything grow according to its own way. To be too successful is to be on the path to defeat.

Religion	How the beliefs embodied by each religion can relate to ecological behaviour
Hinduism 	<p>Followers are asked to see God in every object in the Universe (air, water, fire, sun, moon, stars, and Earth). Earth is worshipped as the spouse of God, therefore all lives on Earth are considered as children of God and Earth and should be treated with respect and compassion. The search for material possessions, and the consumption of materials and energy it brings, should not be allowed to dominate life because true happiness comes from within not from outer possessions and the efforts to exploit the things of this world is considered to be a distraction from this central purpose of life.</p>
Islam 	<p>Allah created humans to be guardians of His creation (Khalifa - Trusteeship). Allah is unity, and His unity is reflected in the unity of humanity and nature. We must therefore maintain the integrity of the Earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and environment. Our responsibility is to keep balance and harmony in Allah's creation (Tawheed - unity). Allah will one day judge humans on their responsibilities following the guidance of Islam (Akrah - accountability). All these principals have been translated into practical directions for how to live, embodied in the laws of Islam (Shariah). For example, Shariah law protects animals from cruelty, conserves forests, and limits the growth of cities.</p>
Jainism 	<p>Ahimsa means not having the intention of causing physical, mental or spiritual harm to any part of nature for in the words of Mahavira (who established what are considered to be the central tenets of Jainism, and a contemporary of Siddhartha): 'You are that which you wish to harm'. All of nature is bound together, caring for nature cares for oneself, not to waste the gifts of nature, and to reduce one's needs as far as possible. As Gandhi said, 'There is enough in this world for everybody's need, but not for anybody's greed.'</p>
Judaism 	<p>Nature in all its beauty is created for humans, and one's connection to nature restores one's original state of happiness and joy therefore Love of God includes love of all His creations. The destruction of anything from which humans may benefit is prohibited, even in the time of war.</p>
Rastafari*	<p>I-tal food is food approved for consumption by Rastafarians. The word is derived from vital, where the first syllable is replaced by the word I to signify unity of the Rastafarian with all of nature. Rastafarians only eat foods that have come from the creator being in a whole or natural state and try not to eat processed or preserved foods. Many are vegetarian and vegan.</p>

Religion	How the beliefs embodied by the religion can relate to ecological behaviour
<div>Shintoism</div> <div></div>	Musubi is the spiritual power that brings about life, fertility, and prosperity. This is perceived in all the workings of nature. The ideal life that one should lead needs to be in harmony with and united with nature.
<div>Sikhism</div> <div></div>	Humans create their surroundings as a reflection of their inner state thus the growing emptiness of the earth reflects a spiritual emptiness within humans. The recognition and nurturing of the divine inner spark within oneself is encouraged because only then can one see it and cherish it in others. A simple life free from noticeable waste is the Sikh ideal - a life that stresses mastery over the self rather than mastery over nature. Sikh leaders have chosen the current 300-year 'Cycle of creation' (1999-2299) to be characterised by increased environmental practice by Sikh temples.
<div>Zoroastrianism</div> <div></div>	This world is made of the Seven Creations - sky, water, earth, plant, animal, human and fire. Human beings, as the purposeful creation of God, are seen as the natural motivators or overseers of the Seven Creations as part of a symbiotic relationship. The physical world is seen as a natural environment of Seven Creations in which life and growth are inter-dependent if harmony and perfection is to be the final goal. The role of humanity is not only to serve the Creator but also to honour the Seven Creations - through recreating the primordial unity of a perfect world.

* Rastafari is not a member of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation. This information has been added for this report, because of its relevance to London's ethnic communities.

Appendix II: Where to get more help

The following is a list of business support agencies that offer advice to London's food businesses. We have classified the agencies for their specialist knowledge in the following areas:



environmental sustainability



specialist work on food



promotion and support of ethnic diversity



general business support



London Food Link

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

94 White Lion Street

London N1 9PF

Tel: 020 7837 1228

Fax: 020 7837 1141

Email: zeenat@sustainweb.org

Web: www.sustainweb.org



London Food Link (LFL) runs a network of organisations and individuals as diverse as farmers, food writers, caterers and community food projects. LFL provides a free service (subject to location) brokering supplier relationships between food manufacturers and producers/growers of local, organic and fair-trade ingredients; matching needs and solving problems of transport, distribution, quality and continuity of supply. Members of LFL pay a small fee for access to information, network events and the network newsletter. LFL is undertaking research with London's food businesses, such as restaurants, caterers, food processors and ethnic food manufacturers, to identify opportunities for promoting sustainable food. LFL also works with the Food Strategy Unit of the London Development Agency and other policy organisations to help support a more sustainable and equitable food system for London.



Good Food on the Public Plate

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

94 White Lion Street

London N1 9PF

Tel: 020 7837 1228

Fax: 020 7837 1141

Email: emma@sustainweb.org

Web: www.sustainweb.org



The 'Good Food on the Public Plate' project works to increase the proportion of sustainable food used in public sector catering, such as hospitals and schools. It builds on the pilot 'London Hospital Food Project' which increased the proportion of local and organic food in four hospitals in London to an average of 10%. The project has now been expanded to include care homes, schools and hospitals in the South East and aims to increase the proportion of local and organic food used in these organisations to 15% for new organisations and 30% for hospitals that are already part of the project.



ABi Associates Limited

The Grange, Neasden Lane

London NW10 1QB

Tel: 020 8438 4550

Email: info@abi.co.uk

Web: www.abi.co.uk



Established in 1995 to influence the development of black, Asian and minority ethnic businesses, ABi is a business development company providing support to small and growing SMEs. ABi provides professional business consultancy, training and support, including e-business, a loan fund, advice on tender applications, networking opportunities and training on exploiting opportunities in new markets.

ABi's programme 'Creative Food Solutions' was launched in September 2006. Funded by the London Development Agency (LDA), and in partnership with food manufacturing consultancy Not Just Food, this free programme aims to support economic growth in up to 150 BAME-owned London food manufacturers. ABi runs networking events, organises appointments with specialist consultants about issues affecting food businesses and places interns in businesses to work on specific projects. Find out more at www.creativefoodsolutions.biz.



BME Action Plan

Public Liaison Unit
London Development Agency
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8AA
Public Liaison Unit: 020 7593 9000
Switchboard: 020 7593 8000
Web: www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.984

The London Development Agency (LDA) commissioned research in 2002 to determine the current position and contribution (and consequently the business needs) of London's Black, Asian, Chinese ethnic minority groups. Subsequently, the LDA has developed action plans focusing on business support and advice; international partnerships and trade; public and private sector contracts; business finance; business premises and information; data and research. Collaborations and projects to achieve the aims of the plans are due to be completed by March 2007. Although the LDA does not offer advice direct to businesses, they are able to offer progress updates on the BME Action Plan.



British Retail Consortium

2nd Floor, 21 Dartmouth Street
London SW1H 9BP
Tel: 020 7854 8900
Web: www.brc.org.uk

The British Retail Consortium is a trade association that represents a range of retailers of varying sectors, size and location. There are three levels of membership; the cheapest being £3,200 per year and the most expensive based on turnover. Members of policy advisory groups meet regularly

to form industry representative responses to Government on policies that, if approved, could add burdens on the retail sector; presently there are advisory groups specifically focused on Corporate Social Responsibility and Food. In addition, the BRC offers services including: training events, publications, web access to retail statistics, consumer research and information on policies and issues (including sustainability and product traceability).



Business Environmental Support and Training (BEST)



Environmental Health and Trading Standards
Ealing Council, 5th Floor, Perceval House,
14-16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing W5 2HL
Tel: 020 8825 5313
Fax: 020 8825 6661
Email: becketta@ealing.gov.uk
Web: www.ealing.gov.uk/services/business/business_and_the_environment/best/

Launched in September 2006 in partnership with Groundwork West London and Envirowise, BEST coordinates environmental support and advice to all Ealing businesses on everything from energy efficient equipment and lighting to reducing packaging, developing monitoring systems and disposing of waste and hazardous chemicals correctly. Members sign up for free, gaining access to training workshops and seminars, networking events, information on changes to legislation and funding opportunities. Legal requirements for food hygiene and safety in Ealing's food businesses may be found at www.ealing.gov.uk/services/business/food_businesses/.



Business Works

46 Greenwich Church Street
London SE10 9BL

Tel: 020 8858 8850

Email: info@businessgreenwich.co.uk

Web: <http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/Business/SupportAndAdvice/BusinessWorks/>

Business Works operates in Greenwich and Bexley. It is a comprehensive, cost-free service offering a range of professional business support services to BAME enterprises, from idea to start-up.



Caribbean Cuisine Consortium (CCC)

PO Box 2034, Ilford
Essex IG1 9FL

Tel: 0870 286 1700

Email: office@caribbeanfoodemporium.co.uk

Web: www.caribbeanfoodemporium.co.uk/cccorg.htm

CCC is a not-for-profit business support, networking, promotion and education organisation. It aims to encourage the growth and development of Caribbean cuisine in the UK. Membership costs £100 per year and is open to those who are committed to improving the understanding and appreciation of Caribbean food and drink and, in doing so, help share the spirit of the Caribbean islands' diverse cultural and culinary heritage. The CCC publishes a bi-monthly magazine, offers training for business owners and staff, runs networking events and provides a curriculum for teaching schoolchildren about Caribbean food.



Centre for Environment and Safety Management for Businesses (CESMB)

Middlesex University, Queensway, Enfield
Middlesex EN3 4SA

Tel: 020 8411 6067

Email: l.corr@mdx.ac.uk

Web: www.mdx.ac.uk/www/cesmb/

CESMB collaborate with local authorities, chambers of commerce and other business support organisations, at a local and national level, to run a range of externally funded projects for improving the environmental performance of SMEs, gaining business benefits along the way. Many of CESMB's services are either free or heavily subsidised by Government and EU funding. The CESMB website offers comprehensive fact sheets on why environmental good practice is important, and ways to implement it.

Current projects include a free scheme for London retailers, including those in the food sector, to gain a Certificate in Recycling for Sustainability. In addition, small and medium sized food manufacturers across London can benefit from free product and process support through the sustainable innovation project, Advance, resulting in more efficient processes, waste management and cost savings (some geographical restrictions apply to this service.)



Centre for Innovation and Partnerships (CIPs)

Newham College of Further Education
Boardman House, 1st Floor, 64 Broadway
London E15 1NT

Tel: 0845 650 4244 Fax: 020 8257 4415

Email: info@cipsonline.com

Web: www.cipsonline.com/cips



The Centre for Innovation and Partnerships (CIPs) provides support to Newham's small businesses in order to foster social integration, and provide training opportunities for people not previously attracted to education. In particular, CIPs can help with growing businesses, finding investors, assess training and IT requirements, and support recruitment including providing interns and unpaid workers. CIPs is a government-funded, non-profit organisation, so many of services are free or subsidised.



Creative Environmental Networks

Ambassador House, Brigstock Road
Thornton Heath CR7 7JG
Tel: 020 8683 6600
Email: enquiries@cen.org.uk
Web: www.cen.org.uk

Creative Environmental Networks is a not-for-profit organisation that offers a range of services to engage householders, businesses and communities in environmental and social improvement. CEN works across the UK with local, regional and national government bodies as well as with charitable groups and commercial organisations. CEN has a particular focus on sustainable energy, fuel poverty, and other environmental areas.

Services include environmental auditing and implementation of sustainable energy systems, all designed to make a positive impact on business practice. Cost is assessed on a case-by-case basis, although there is scope for free, grant-funded advice and support if, for example, large carbon emissions savings can be made.



Envirowise

Tel: 0800 585794 (helpline)
Email: www.envirowise.gov.uk/page.aspx?o=contact
Web: www.envirowise.gov.uk

Envirowise provides a government-funded programme of free, confidential and independent advice on all aspects of utility efficiency and key environmental issues to businesses in the UK. This assistance enables companies to increase profitability and reduce their environmental impact. Envirowise is managed on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) by Momenta, an operating division of AEA Technology plc, and Technology Transfer and Innovation Ltd (TTI), a subsidiary of Serco Limited.



Ethnic Minority Business Forum

Small Business Service, 1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000
Email: embf@sbs.qsi.gov.uk
Web: www.ethnicbusiness.org



The Ethnic Minority Business Forum provides independent advice to government on SME policy and practice in relation to ethnic minority businesses. The EMBF is happy to receive views or comments by email on the business needs of ethnic minority entrepreneurs, to assist its dialogue with government. The EMBF does not provide advice to individual BME businesses or deliver any business support services. For enquiries of this nature please refer to local Business Link organisations, details of which can be found at www.businesslink.gov.uk or by calling 0845 600 9006.



Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project (EMEP)

The Business Development Centre
7-15 Greatorex Street, London E1 5NF



Tel: 020 7655 0906

Email: info@emep.co.uk



Web: www.emep.co.uk



EMEP aims to be a one-stop-shop for free and subsidised business support to ethnic minority-led businesses in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. The project encourages the development of local business networks, encourages visitors through festival promotions and gives voice to the concerns of the local business community. EMEP's Restaurant Support Programme works specifically with restaurants in "Banglatown" on Brick Lane to help them remain competitive through staff training, improved food hygiene and environmental management practices such as waste minimisation and recycling.



The Food Club

6 The Ridgeway, North Harrow
Middlesex HA2 7QN



Tel: 020 8868 0113

Email: admin@thefoodclub.org.uk

Web: www.thefoodclub.org.uk

The Food Club is a business-led member network for SMEs that are in, or which supply, the food industry. Membership is available at variable cost. Most of the Club's members are from West London and the bordering home counties, including the Park Royal industrial estate (the largest remaining industrial area in London.) The Club's aim is to encourage trade between members and others. Club services include network meetings, online information, training, legal and business advice and

supply chain support. The Food Club was formed in 1996, has over 90 members and belongs to the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



The Food Network

34 Ridding Lane, Greenford UB6 0JY

Tel: 020 8864 9052

Email: foodnetwork@notjustfood.co.uk

Web: www.thefoodnetwork.co.uk

The Food Network is a shared email list between food-related businesses offering buying and selling advice, contacts and other food related information. Members, including businesses from food manufacturing, graphic design, product development, consultancy, retail and public relations, are able to post questions, services or information on the forum. The Food Network is free to join.



Food Standards Agency

Aviation House, 125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6NH

Tel: 020 7276 8000

Email: helpline@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.food.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency is an independent government department with a remit to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food. The website is a useful source of information and contains guidance notes on topics such as food hygiene legislation, importing food, nutrition, working in the meat industry, and food safety management for retailers and caterers. The website also has copies of downloadable food industry publications, website links to related organisations and regulatory information.

**Greener Food**

London Sustainability Exchange (LSx)
Overseas House, 19 - 23 Ironmonger Row
London EC1V 3QN
Tel: 020 7324 3655
Email: j.ansine@lsx.org.uk
Web: www.lsx.org.uk



Greener Food is a 2-year project funded by the London Development Agency and managed by LSx. The project aims to improve the environmental management of London's hospitality and catering businesses. With five project partners, including London Food Link, Greener Food will audit 300 businesses in 15 boroughs to monitor use of water, energy, volumes of recycling, purchasing and promotion of sustainable ingredients. These free audits are offered to BME- and women- owned businesses.

**Green Mark**

The London Environment Centre
London Metropolitan University
133 Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QA
Tel: 020 7320 3464
Email: lec@londonmet.ac.uk
Web: www.green-mark.co.uk

The Green Mark award is a cost-effective scheme that allows SMEs from any industry to demonstrate ongoing environmental responsibility to customers, suppliers and staff. The cost of the scheme varies according to company size, complexity and progress already made towards environmental good practice. Costs can be subsidised with funds from the London Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund.

There are three stages to the Green Mark scheme and as long as the company meets the necessary criteria for each level, they are awarded a certificate and given the Green Mark logo to use for marketing purposes. The award is achieved by going through an auditing process, allowing the company to improve environmental performance before the final audit is undertaken. To keep the Green Mark after the first twelve months, companies must demonstrate they have sustained their level of environmental good practice. Examples of Green Mark award winners in food manufacturing and catering may be found at www.green-mark.co.uk/contact/location1.htm.

**Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency**

Forum @ Greenwich
Trafalgar Road
London SE10 9EQ
Tel: 020 8269 4880
Fax: 020 8269 4899
Web: www.gcda.org.uk

Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA) is a social enterprise development agency serving the diverse communities of Greenwich. GCDA's aim is the promotion, development and support of the co-operative/social enterprise sector as part of local sustainable economic development, with a strong focus on food projects. GCDA projects include: Food Initiatives; Business for All; South Greenwich Social Enterprise; Social Enterprise Support; London Start-up and Micro Support Programme; and E-enterprise for the over 50s.



Haringey Food & Drink Cluster

Civic Centre, High Road

Wood Green N22 8LE

Tel: 020 8489 0000

Email: murali@lakera.com

Web: www.open4business.info/haringey



Haringey Food and Drink Cluster is a network of businesses working together for the food and drink sector in Haringey. The network meets quarterly and publishes a newsletter, 'Haringey Eats', containing funding news, advice and profiles of Haringey's food businesses. Membership is free and open to all Haringey food and drink businesses.



London Environmental Support Service (LESS)

Business Link for London

Link House

292 - 308 Southbury Road

Enfield

EN1 1TS

Tel: 0845 6000 787

Fax: 020 8443 7270

Email: info@bl4london.com

Web: www.less-online.com

LESS is a free online service offering businesses a simple way to find environmental information, advice and support, all in one place on the LESS website. The service is funded by the London Development Agency and delivered by Business Link for London. LESS service users and providers sign up to the website, thus gaining access to information and support on topics such as air quality, green transport and sustainable procurement.



London Environment Centre

113 Whitechapel High Street

London E1 7AQ

Tel: 020 7320 2236

Fax: 020 7320 2297

Web: www.londonmet.ac.uk/lec/pages/whoweare.html

Part of the London Metropolitan University, the London Environment Centre (LEC) provides services that aim to improve business environmental practices in London. LEC also runs a Business Environmental Efficiency Award (see 'Green Mark') that encourages businesses in London to improve their environmental performance by providing free environmental advice to small and medium sized businesses.



The London Food Centre

London South Bank University

103 Borough Road

London SE1 0AA

Tel: 020 7815 7988

Email : lfc@lsbu.ac.uk

Web: www.londonfood.org.uk

The London Food Centre assists SMEs in the food industry to improve their technical expertise and performance to assure the production of safe food. The Centre's work includes food safety courses, training courses (including BSc and MSc), seminars and workshops. The Centre charges businesses for research and development services such as the technical specification of recipes, or measurement of product stability and shelf life. Initial enquiries are free of charge before any agreed and costed programme of work goes ahead.

In conjunction with South Bank University, the London Food Centre can offer placements in food manufacturing businesses to students.

**London Manufacturing Advisory Service**

33 Queen Street

London EC4R 1AP

Tel: 0845 850 4400

Email: info@mas-london.co.uk

Web: www.mas-london.co.uk



London Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) is a DTI service supported by the London Development Agency. The service aims to support London's manufacturers to operate more effectively by providing engineering, marketing and business development expertise to design better products and better production systems. Specialists can offer London manufacturers two days of free advice and a further five days of subsidised help. The website offers case studies of businesses who have benefitted from MAS's services, and free information on a wide range of topics of particular interest to manufacturers, including operational effectiveness, product development, business strategy and environmental performance.

**London Remade**

1 Quality Court, Chancery Lane

London WC2A 1HR

Tel: 020 7061 6360

Fax: 020 7061 6391

Email: info@londonremade.com

Web: www.londonremade.com

London Remade aims to increase the volume of London's waste that is recycled.. This is achieved by developing markets for recycled content products (RCPs), providing tailored support to help green enterprises to grow, and introducing green practices to existing businesses. London Remade also advises London boroughs on improving recycling waste management. The aim is to transform London's waste into a reusable resource, to create viable everyday products and reduce the impact on landfills. London Remade is funded by the London Development Agency. It runs the following programmes - all free of charge:

- *Enhance*: A business support programme providing assistance to SMEs and social enterprises involved in waste collection, recycling, manufacturing, re-use, reprocessing and refurbishment in London.
- *Inspired Recycling*: A programme to encourage the sale of items that use recycled materials by supporting the design and development of innovative and imaginative products.
- *Enviro Entrepreneur*: The Enviro Entrepreneur Summer School, developed by London Remade and QED Consulting, takes entrepreneurial candidates through the process of starting and developing a business, providing them with business skills to get off to a successful start.



Netregs

Environment Agency
Block 1, Government Buildings
Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol BS10 6BF
Tel: 0870 8506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Web: www.netregs.gov.uk

NetRegs is a partnership between the Environment Agency and other UK environmental regulators. It provides free guidance to SMEs throughout the UK to ensure compliance with environmental regulations, and thus reduce costs by, for example, reducing waste. The website offers case studies, such as a cheese processor who carried out a waste review which led to the implementation of a waste reduction strategy; and a collagen casings manufacturer who, after the Netregs review, was able to reduce consumption of raw materials, energy and water.



Not Just Food

34 Ridding Lane, Greenford UB6 0JY
Tel: 020 8864 9052
Fax: 0870 762 6825
Email: jane@notjustfood.co.uk
Web: www.notjustfood.co.uk



Not Just Food is run by Jane Milton as a for-profit consultancy offering expertise in the sales and marketing of food products, from business strategy through to product design, recipe development and marketing plan. Not Just Food run workshops that draw on Jane's experience working in the food industry. Jane also initiated and moderates the email list The Food Network (see above).



South East Enterprise

26 Burney Street, Greenwich
London SE10 8EX
Tel: 020 8305 2222
Fax: 020 8858 7010
Email: info@seenterprise.co.uk
Web: www.seenterprise.co.uk

South East Enterprise offers a range of client-focused services to established businesses, start-ups, or individuals wishing to update their IT or business skills. Their aim is to equip local businesses to enable them to compete successfully for local contracts. Amongst others, courses include: starting and developing your own business; IT and business skills, and web design services.



West London Business

West London Centre
15-21 Staines Road
Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 3HR
Tel: 020 8607 2500
Email: simon.caffrey@westlondon.com
Web: www.westlondon.com



West London Business (WLB) is the business-led chamber of commerce open to businesses in the London boroughs of Harrow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Ealing, Brent, Hillingdon and Hounslow. WLB aim to inform and inspire business owners to think differently by offering networking in an informal environment. Its programme, the West London Food Offer, provides co-ordinated support to member food businesses from a range of business support partners, including London Food Link. Member rates start at £350 with special discounts given to start-ups and sector specific businesses

Appendix III: Contact details of case studies

During 2006, we conducted interviews with London food businesses owned by members of ethnic communities. The following businesses are profiled as case studies in this report.

By Chaat House Ltd

Unit A8a, Aladdin Business Centre
426 Long Drive
Greenford
Middlesex UB6 8HZ
Tel: 020 8578 5602
Email: info@chaathouse.co.uk
Web: www.chaathouse.co.uk

Bronek's Deli

124 Northfields Avenue
Ealing W13 9RT
Tel: 020 8579 2722

Caterer's International Ltd

Unit 2, Devonshire Court
Victoria Road
Feltham TW13 7LT
Tel: 020 8751 0000
Email: johnson@caterersintl.com
Web: www.caterersintl.com

FudCo Quality Products

Wholesale:
Unit E, Cobbold Estate
Cobbold Road
Willesden
London NW10 9ST
Tel: 020 8459 0909
Email: info@fudco.co.uk

Retail:

184 Ealing Road
Wembley
Middlesex HA0 4QD
Tel: 020 8902 4820

Gazebo Fine Foods

Unit 2/4, Fourth Way
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 0LH
Tel: 020 8900 0244
Email: office@gazebocuisine.co.uk
Web: www.gazebocuisine.co.uk

The London Tea Company

Central House
1 Ballards Lane
Finchley
London N3 1LQ
Tel: 020 8349 8089
Email: info@londontea.co.uk
Web: www.londontea.co.uk

M & R Superfresh

Stand 91 & 108
New Spitalfields Market
Sherrin Road
Leyton
London E10 5SQ
Tel: 020 8556 0101

NamaYasai LLP

Tel: 01273 470 667
Email: info@namayasai.co.uk
Web: www.namayasai.co.uk

Oasis Catering

161 Wembley Hill Road
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 8EL
Tel: 07956 841 659

Organic India now operating as:

Roseplex Ventures Ltd
t/a Tuck Home Delivery
Unit 17 D & E
Queensway, Enfield
Middlesex
Tel: 020 8804 4411
Mobile: 07957 418 060
Email: mamun.rashid@btinternet.com
Web: www.tuckhomedelivery.co.uk

Port Royal Patties

Units 9 & 10 Trojan Industrial Estate
Cobbold Road
Willesden
London NW10 9ST
Tel: 020 8451 6166
Email: ejohnston@portroyalpatties.co.uk
Web: www.blingblingpatty.co.uk

Ummah Foods Ltd

PO Box 1858
Ilford IG5 0WD
Tel: 07967 171 073
Email: info@ummahfoods.com
Web: www.ummahfoods.com

Willowbrook Farm

Hampton Gay
Oxfordshire OX5 2QQ
Tel: 01865 849 957
Email:
enquiries@willowbrookorganic.org
Web: www.willowbrookorganic.org

Winner Foods

Unit B, 45-53 Markfield Road
London N15 4QA
Tel: 020 8880 3678
Email: info@winnerfoods.com
Web: www.winnerfoods.com

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Working Party members

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Recipe for a Greener Curry

How London's ethnic business can
celebrate sustainable food

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Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming is a registered charity which advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the living and working environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming
94 White Lion Street, London. N1 9PF
Tel: 0207 837 1228 Fax: 0207 837 1141
sustain@sustainweb.org
www.sustainweb.org

Sustain Registered Charity No: 1018643



Samosa production line,
Gazebo Fine Foods

