

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE
SUBMISSION FROM FOOD FOR LIFE SCOTLAND
THE DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN (RPP3)

Introduction

1. Food for Life Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Scottish Government's 'Draft Climate Change Plan 2017-2032'. Food for Life Scotland is an evidence-based programme delivered by Soil Association Scotland¹, which works with organisations and communities across Scotland to make good food the easy choice in schools, hospitals, care homes, workplaces and cities. Good food is:
 - Food that's good for your health – lots of fruit and vegetables, fish and wholegrains, a bit less but better quality meat, and a lot less processed food. Good food is even better when it's shared.
 - Food that's good for the environment – in season, sustainably produced, low-climate impact and high animal welfare standards.
 - Food that's good for the economy – grown by local producers, prepared by skilled and knowledgeable people, and supports a thriving economy.
2. This response addresses the wider role of food production and consumption – which spans most of the sectors covered in the draft plan – and actions for reducing emissions through the food supply with a focus on post farm-gate activities. The UK's food system as a whole – from field to plate – accounts for around 20% of all GHG emissions (excluding land use change)ⁱ. How we process, package, store, distribute, sell and buy our food matters because around 50% of food's carbon footprint in the developed world is a direct result of these post-farm gate activities.ⁱⁱ
3. While we welcome that the plan identifies the emission envelopes and interventions that would achieve the required emission reductions at the least cost across the economy, it is also important that links are made with other key policies. For food this means considering what links can be made with the forthcoming Good Food Nation Bill; what we eat not only influences our health, it has an impact on our environment too. Linking health and climate change in challenging our eating habits could have a greater impact than focusing on each of these issues in isolation. To this end, our response focuses on **building a collaborative approach** to changing the food environment and **achieving transformational change** with a particular emphasis in food behaviours.

A collaborative approach: shorter, greener, fairer supply chains

4. **National and local government should show leadership in the way they procure 'public food' for schools, hospitals, care homes, work-place canteens etc.** Public procurement of local and sustainable food offers one of the most effective mechanisms for driving transformation in food production and supply – helping to create shorter, greener and fairer supply chains and supporting local jobs, businesses and communities by engaging them in the procurement process.

¹ Food for Life Scotland is funded by Scottish Government.

5. Organic farming reduces environmental pollution and the release of greenhouse gases from food production by severely restricting the use of artificial chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Many European countries are using organic farming to drive sustainable, productive and profitable agriculture, whilst creating public demand for organic food through a range of policy-led interventions such as public procurement targets.
6. This has worked well in countries like Denmark and France. In Copenhagen a close partnership between the city council and a non-commercial foundation, [Copenhagen House of Food](#), developed an innovative approach for increasing organic food in public canteens. Instead of replacing conventional ingredients with organic ingredients, Copenhagen House of Food placed an emphasis on creating balanced diet plans using less meat, more vegetables, purchasing in-season and reducing waste by 50%. The result: healthier, organic, climate-friendly meals, and pride among the 1,700 kitchen staff. This has made organic food very much the norm with around 13% making up total food sales in the city and 90% of food served in the city's public institutions is organic. [Denmark](#) has the highest organic market share in the world at 7.6%. [France](#) has passed a law requiring all of the nation's public institutions to source at least 40% of their food locally from certified sustainable sources by 2020 and reduce France's carbon footprint by 12%.ⁱⁱⁱ
7. In Scotland, the [Food for Life Catering Mark](#) award scheme, with targets for organic produce set at 5% for Silver award holder and 15% for Gold award holders, provides a framework for increasing organic in public sector kitchen. Local authorities such as North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire have successfully achieved 15% organic, while Stirling Council, a number of schools in Highland Council, City of Edinburgh, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City have achieved 5% organic produce.

Policy recommendation

8. Set a minimum target of 15% organic produce in public sector kitchens by 2021. The Food for Life Catering Mark at Gold level provides a framework for achieving this.
9. Our current food system is dominated by big food companies which have a monopoly over choice and price. **We need more farmers, crofters and growers - including new entrants - producing food (veg, fruit and livestock produce for human consumption) and selling direct, or through local SMEs, to communities for example using farmers' markets, cooperatives and local shops - reconnecting our towns and cities with sustainable local food production.**
10. This needs to be supported by investment in supply chain infrastructure; collaborative actions which encourage SMEs to cooperate to improve collection and distribution channels; improving energy and resource efficiency; using cleaner and renewable energy e.g. purchased green energy; and business development activities which help SMEs to effectively engage with retailers and caterers.
11. Local government can play key role in helping to develop sustainable climate-friendly food systems which promote healthier diets, tackle inequalities and contribute to

thriving local economies. [Sustainable Food Cities](#) (SFC) is an exemplar of a UK place-based model which encourages public, private and third sector organisations and local communities to work together to improve their food systems and tackle environmental, social and economic issues. 45 cities and areas across the UK including [Glasgow](#) and [Edinburgh](#) have achieved SFC status and set-up cross-sector partnerships.

Policy recommendations

12. Every local authority area in Scotland should establish an effective cross-sector food partnership that works to embed good food in policy and practice. The Sustainable Food Cities model is one tool for achieving this.

13. Many local authorities across Scotland will be revising their Single Outcome Agreements in 2017, ensure that good food is considered as a tool for delivering local outcomes across all areas of policy.

Achieving transformational change: transforming Scotland's diet

14. To transform the way Scotland farms, we need to transform Scotland's diet, and create greener and fairer food systems which provide everyone with access to sustainable food that is climate-friendly, healthy, nutritious and produced as locally as possible to high ethical, environmental and animal welfare standards.

15. Scottish children and adults have very high levels of diet related poor health – amongst the worst in the world. The annual cost to NHS Scotland of overweight and obesity combined may be as much as £600 million (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2015). As a nation, our diet is laden with fats, salt and sugar and too low in fibre, fruit and vegetables, and other healthy foods like oil-rich fish.^{iv} This type of diet has an impact on health and the environment – it leads to increased heart disease and higher greenhouse gas emissions from meat production. Not only that, our food is less diverse. 75% of our food comes from only twelve plants and five animal species. This has negative implications for our health, food quality and for our soils.^v

16. As the plan notes, **eating a healthy, sustainable diet, high in seasonal food is one of the ten key behaviour areas**. Progress on achieving this, is identified by percentage of people who consume 5 portions or more of fruit and vegetables per day. The proportion of adults meeting the 5-a-day recommendations has remained fairly constant over time. In 2015, 21% of adults met or exceeded the recommended five portions, down slightly from a high of 23% in 2009. The proportion of adults eating no fruit and vegetables has remained at between 9% and 11% each year since 2003 (11% in 2015).^{vi} The public sector is uniquely placed to increase access to freshly prepared, nutritious food for the most vulnerable in society: increasing access to fresh food, can contribute to closing the healthy inequality gap.^{vii}

17. To deliver on this, training and continuous professional development should be supported throughout the supply chain: farmers sharing best practice for sustainable production techniques in a changing climate; small food businesses learning vital skills to make their venture a success; caterers acquiring the know-how to make their menus more healthy and sustainable while staying within budget; and kitchen staff learning new food preparation skills. This can have wider, positive impacts for inclusive

economic growth. Independent evaluation of local authorities that have achieved the Food for Life Catering Mark showed that the introduction of fresh food and training into kitchens had a positive and attributable impact on school caterers' sense of job satisfaction, increased their knowledge of food attributes and improved their fresh food production skills and delivered a £3 social return on investment (SROI) mostly in the form of employment opportunities.

18. **Giving everyone the skills, knowledge, confidence and access to eat healthy and sustainable food will be an essential ingredient for reducing food waste.** Over one third of all food produced, sold and prepared for human consumption is never eaten.^{viii} Inputs used to produce the food are wasted not to mention the GHG emissions created through processing, storage, transportation and landfill.
19. We welcome the food waste targets in the Draft Climate Change Plan. Changing our behaviour around food will also be vital to reducing food's GHG emissions. Scottish households throw away 600,000 tonnes of food every year – nearly a third of all household waste. Eliminating this food waste would save the equivalent of at least 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, the same benefit as taking 1 in every 4 cars off our roads.^{ix} Some recent studies also identify reducing consumption of energy intensive foods – including processed food – as priority actions to reduce food's environmental impact.

Policy recommendations

20. 75% of all food served in public sector settings, to both staff and service users, is freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients by 2021. The Food for Life Catering Mark is one tool for delivering on this.
21. Invest in training and development programmes so that all public sector catering staff have the skills and expertise to prepare and cook fresh food.
22. While the two policy recommendations above focus on increasing the supply of fresh food; measures to increase demand for fresh food are also essential. Food education - including curricular, vocational, community-based and public-facing campaigns – will be key to engendering good food behaviours and food choices for the climate, the environment and public health.

Food for Life Scotland
9 February 2017

References

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<http://www.fcrn.org.uk/fcrn/publications/how-low-can-we-go>

ⁱⁱ Garnett, T. (2010) *Where are the best opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the food system (including the food chain)?* Elsevier

<http://www.futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/sites/futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/files/Reducing%20food%20system%20GHGS.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Assemblée Nationale (accessed 11-11-16)

<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/propositions/pion3280.asp>

^{iv} Food Standards Scotland (2015) *The Scottish Diet: It needs to change.*

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/Situation%20Report%20-%20COMPLETE%20AND%20FINAL.pdf>

^v Springmann, M. et al, March 2016, Analysis and valuation of the health and climate change cobenefits of dietary change, PNAS 2016 113 (15) 4146-4151

^{vi} Source: Scottish Health Survey (SHeS), 2015

^{vii} Teeman D et al (2011) Qualitative Impact Evaluation of the Food for Life Partnership Programme.
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^{viii} United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (accessed 11-11-16)

<http://www.unric.org/en/food-waste/27133-one-third-of-all-food-wasted>

^{ix} Love Food Hate Waste (accessed 11-11-16)

<http://scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com/content/help-save-environment-simply-wasting-less-food>