

Recipe for Success: Scotland's National Food & Drink Policy – Becoming a Good Food Nation



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)

Title Mr Ms Mrs Miss Dr *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Simm

Forename

Geoff

2. Postal Address

Vice Principal Research

SRUC

Peter Wilson Building, West Mains Road

Edinburgh

Postcode EH9 3JG

Phone 0131 535 4219

Email
geoff.simm@sruc.ac.uk

3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

/ Group/Organisation

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

- (d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes

No

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?

No comments provided.

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

A clear approach and sound evaluation methods need to be put in place for evaluating the 'grand aspirations' (i.e. a 'Good Food Nation').

Moreover, a realistic timescale is required to meet the aspirations.

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

The proposed areas of focus are, in principle, fine and they are consistent with the 'Recipe for Success' policy document. This is because, overall, the document is still focused on improving the sustainability of the food system through the growth of the food and drink sector, improving consumers' food choices and increasing the contribution of food at a local and regional level.

The main challenge is not necessarily the specific priority areas considered in the document but how to integrate them in a way that all the objectives pursued by each area are satisfied. For instance, the 'growth' and 'local food' areas might be in conflict with the 'health' area if growth in the food and drink industry (and maybe local food) is led by the production of food high in sugar, fats or salt.

As mentioned above, the focus of the document is on improving the sustainability of the food system and therefore the priorities should be allocated to pursue those goals. As it is in the document there is some degree of repetition in terms of food choice and growth. Children's food policy is a sub-area of good food choices as parents have plenty to say about children's food choice. As regards growth, local food is part of the food sector and should be a sub-area (regional or local growth) of economic growth. Food in the public sector is not a goal per se; it is a measure to incentivise economic growth, to promote local food and to promote food choice.

It would be useful to have a 'working definition' of what is meant by the terms: 'so we can move towards a healthier, resilient and sustainable food system', and a shared understanding of how we assess or measure them. For example, is animal welfare included under sustainability, what level of animal welfare are we referring to (minimum standards or above) and how

do we assess welfare for this purpose? Further, we need to consider what we do about imported animal products and how we apply the same standards of health, resilience and sustainability to these.

4. How would *your* life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in *your* locality?

No comments provided.

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

It is important that we define and measure the importance of local food in the food and drink sector. There is currently a lack of information about this. Research at SRUC indicates that the local food sector is heterogenous in terms of products. It is important that we define more clearly what areas will be supported. (See also our comments provided in Question 3).

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

There are benefits from a joined up approach to food production and the downstream stages of the supply chain (i.e. farm to plate, etc) but more clarity is required with regard to other initiatives and from RESAS. For example, could the Commission act as a link between RESAS and other parts of the Scottish Government which are often removed from the outputs of the RESAS programme?

Commission members chosen should include researchers, but there should also be representation from farmers/primary producers. This should be more than just a marketing exercise for Scottish food, so a 'bottom-up' as well as a 'celebratory top-down' approach is needed.

It is important that the Food Commission takes a broad view of the issues and be oriented to evidence-based decision-making procedures.

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

The indicators should be associated with all the priority areas. There should be a baseline and periodic indicators should be produced and contrasted against the baseline. It should be noted that some indicators for monitoring food consumption are already in place.

In some instances, we need to define better what we mean by the key targets (e.g. health, resilience, sustainability) and then appropriate indicators are needed to assess these.

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

No comments provided.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:

- Food in the public sector
- A children's food policy
- Local food
- Good food choices and
- Continued economic growth?

As mentioned above, the focus of the document is on improving the sustainability of the food system and therefore the priorities should be allocated to pursue those goals. (See also our comments provided in Question 3).

As noted in Question 7, further clarity is required about some of the key targets in the document, in terms of health, resilience and sustainability.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

The document has little to say about the notion of benchmarking, e.g. benchmarking food choices across different socioeconomic groups to better understand food poverty. More information about the proposed use of economic instruments would be helpful, such as fat/sugar taxes in terms of dietary choice.

It may also be appropriate to focus more strongly on dealing with trade-offs, which are implicit in the concept of sustainability.

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

We should try to emphasise the need to work with primary producers and farmers to build a food strategy from the bottom up as well (i.e. taking a whole supply chain approach). The document is rather top down with farmers only mentioned once despite the discussion about sustainable production. Agriculture and horticulture are not mentioned at all in the document.

Many of the words and phrases in this document are common with the RESAS consultation on the next Strategic Research Programme. Our initial internal discussions at SRUC have suggested a few key phrases that would be very relevant in the Good Food Nation context. So we had drafted an organogram of SRUC functional areas under the umbrella of 'Sustainable Supply Chains' which we might possibly subdivide into 'sustainable production' and 'sustainable consumption' which are both pertinent in this

context.

It is interesting that food safety is not mentioned in the document; the Commission is not aspiring to be a food standards agency. However, food safety is part of the RESAS Programme and our research in this area remains highly relevant.

12. What else should be considered?

The collective investment across Main Research Providers offers Scotland the ability to explore the ambitions set out from both the perspectives of both production and consumption.

13. What steps do you plan to take to help Scotland on the journey toward becoming a Good Food Nation – in the next month and in the next 12 months?

No comments provided.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

No comments provided.

Responding to this Consultation Paper

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by 17th October 2014. Please send your response with the completed Respondent Information Form (see "Handling your Response" below) to:

goodfoodnation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:
Good Food Nation
Food and Drink Division
B1 Spur
Saughton House
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD

If you have any queries please contact Eugenia Christie at 0131 244 9574.

This consultation, and all other Scottish Government consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations> .

The Scottish Government has an email alert system for consultations, <http://register.scotland.gov.uk>. This system allows stakeholder individuals and organisations to register and receive a weekly email containing details of all new consultations (including web links). It complements, but in no way replaces Scottish Government distribution lists, and is designed to allow stakeholders to keep up to

date with all Scottish Government consultation activity, and therefore be alerted at the earliest opportunity to those of most interest. We would encourage you to register.

Handling your response

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the Respondent Information Form which forms part of the consultation questionnaire attached as an annex as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation.

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library (see the attached Respondent Information Form). These will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library by (date to be confirmed). You can make arrangements to view responses by contacting the Scottish Government Library on 0131 244 4556.

Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

What happens next?

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered in shaping the direction of Scotland's Food Policy.