

# The National Picture

## *Introducing Defra's Food Chain Programme*

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November 2007

# The Food Chain Programme



Objective:

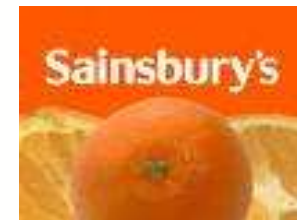
“To reduce the global impact of UK food consumption and production”

Policy timeline:

- 2002** Policy Commission on Farming and Food  
(The Curry Report)  
Sustainable Farming & Food Strategy
- 2003** Sustainable Consumption & Production Strategy
- 2006** Food Industry Sustainability Strategy  
Defra strategy refresh
- 2007** Creation of Food & Farming Group and the  
Food Chain Programme

# Food Issues

- 'Big Four' retailers have 74% of grocery market share
- £1 in every £7 spent in the UK is in Tesco
- Retailers are key influencers, of consumers and back through the supply chain
- Consumer behaviour change is crucial to success, but it is complex
- Opportunity: Rapid growth in ethical and green spending



# Food Issues



**defra**

Department for Environment  
Food and Rural Affairs

- Food is the number one contributor to UK household emissions: 22-31% of household's carbon footprint
- Livestock account for 8% of UK's emissions
- We import 37% of our food, 80% comes from the EU
- £154bn (\$314bn) spent on food, drink and eating out in the UK annually



## Local Food

- Local sourcing can be a good way to provide better returns to producers, but benefits of local food are widely over-claimed



## Organic Food

- Organic production systems have significant benefits for biodiversity, and soils, and produce additional income for some farmers, but some doubt about benefits in relation to climate change

## Carrier bags and food packaging

- Unnecessary packaging seen by consumers as an area where business and government need to act, but much packaging is there to protect the food and reducing it would lead to increased waste or food safety problems

## Food Waste

- Around a third of all food purchased ends up as waste, of which half could have been eaten
- Waste levels in the retail and production chain account for about 10% of all industrial and commercial waste



# Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU)



- Food touches many different areas of public policy
- PMSU will review main trends of food production and consumption in the UK and analyse implications of those trends for the wider economy, society (including public health) and the environment
- UK policy issues: obesity, nutrition, ecology, rural communities, trade and aid, maintaining a competitive food industry
- Output: Recommendations for a future food strategy and the changes or measures needed.
- Reports in March 2008

## Methodology

- Need to address the full life-cycle impacts of products
- Producing a Publicly Available Standard (PAS) for measuring the embodied greenhouse gases in products; food products are a key part of this
- ‘Lighter touch’ than normal Life-Cycle Analysis for individual products, more flexible but still accurate
- Defra and the Carbon Trust co-sponsoring BSI British Standards to deliver the standard



## Methodology/2

- Considerable public interest in outcome of this – potential for ‘carbon labelling’ but we want getting the standard robust first
- is on pack labelling the best way to communicate?



## Influencing consumer behaviour

- Understanding the impact of consumers' consumption of food and drink. Consumers do not make the link between the food they eat and its impact on the environment
- Retailers believe consumer demand drives change, but does it?
- Identifying a series of behavioural goals to address, finding evidence to support our messages, working on how best to deliver them





## Strategic engagement with retailers

- retailers are in a key 'gatekeeper' role
- most are doing a lot already, but scope for more
- 6 monthly Secretary of State / CEO meetings with Big 8 Supermarkets.
- 6 monthly Director level meetings between Defra and Big 8.

## Public Procurement of Food

- Focused on increasing opportunities for small and local producers and increasing demand from the public sector for sustainable food
- quality of school food has had a high political profile

## Vision for a sustainable food chain

- provide clarity and sharper prioritisation amongst the food sector and others on what sustainable food chain will look like.
- cross government
- indicators to measure and track progress.

## International Project/1

- Build relationships with EU, UN, OECD and key import/export countries to encourage co-operation and communicate good practice to the food supply chain and consumers
- Work closely with the PAS methodology project – see it as a first step to an ISO standard
- Gathering evidence of activities relating to sustainable food chains in other countries. E.g. Sweden, The Netherlands, New Zealand and the UN. Sessions are planned with Germany and Norway.



## International Project/2

- Agree and communicate joint position on issue of environment versus international development with Dfid
- Maintain engagement with the Devolved Administrations to ensure a joined up approach to sustainable food policy



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



The Scottish  
Government



Northern Ireland  
Executive

## In two years we hope to have...

- A sound evidence base: how do we put these complex messages into policy and public communication?
- A shared understanding by Government and stakeholders of what a sustainable food chain looks like
- Government and industry are motivated and incentivised to move to more sustainable practices
- Consumers are clear how they can reduce the impact of their food consumption
- The UK leads international thinking and action – taking the PAS to the EU and beyond

# The Future

## And in five to ten years...

- Evidence of reduced global impact of UK food consumption and production
- Increase the socio-economic benefits of food consumption and production both here and in developing countries



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