

Food economy and procurement: minutes: 6th August 2018

Present: Anna Clayton (SFC Lancaster, LESS, Claver Hill), Chris Coates (LESS director), Clairelouise Chapman (Growing Well), Jess Davies (LEC Sustainability group), Emily House (Single Step wholefood coop), Rod Everett (Backsbottom farm), Lucy Antal (Feedback NW coordinator), Melanie Fryer (Landworkers' Alliance NW coordinator), Andrew Kay (Lancaster Mayor, Ridge food club).

Reviewing SFC REFRESH Outcomes

We reviewed the outcomes from the June SFC Lancaster REFRESH event; focusing on the food economy and food procurement break out group notes as there was so much overlap. Some gaps were noted (highlighted in red)

What should work under this theme achieve?

PROMOTION

- Raise awareness of where to buy/ source local and organic products and why they should be bought (local food directory, education materials, food columns, seasonal markets, food festivals, press work etc.)
- Develop awareness of local and sustainable food and the importance of sourcing it.
- Campaign to change consumer behaviour (from consumer to citizen), to increase demand for sustainable and local food.
- Cultivate 'good customers' e.g. those who wont mind a month without salad when a crop gets a pest infestation.

PRODUCTION

- Increase access to land.
- Explore: What volume of food can be produced locally? And prioritise what we should grow and produce.
- Create a ring of small producers around the urban core that are commercially viable.
- Local producers not completely reliant on volunteers.
- More is produced locally, replacing imports/ wholesale. (Coordination encourages complementary growing.)
- Explore the dilemma posed between local and certified organic. Support more local growers in becoming organic?
- Collect and compost rotten veg etc. which is then used in local food production.
- Food producers paid a living wage.
- Local food production increased dramatically.

DISTRIBUTION

- All locally produced food gets to market.

- Access to local food for those who want to buy it: improved stock and distribution.
- A practical, joined up approach to getting produce to market is developed.
- Create a local food distribution hub.
- Local food underpinning hospitality and statutory provision.
- Low carbon delivery system- e bike?
- Fresh food which hasn't travelled loads of miles is easily accessible and not just to those who are affluent (how can we make it more affordable so a diverse range of people can access local and organic food?)
- A number of organisations selling organic food- both in shops and on markets.
- Obligation for organisations (universities, schools, hospitals, prisons etc) to source a minimum amount of local and sustainable produce. Could be imposed in building regulations/ planning as in local jobs.
- Shared selling amongst producers and combined producer delivery rounds.
- Preston model adopted in Lancaster District.
- Local food market.
- Marketing and distribution support/ development.
- Waste veg composted and distributed locally (logistics issue).
- Shared cold storage facilities
- Seasonal gluts processed (adding value) and distributed locally.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- System in place to support businesses development.
- Pathway in place for getting new local food businesses up and running and commercially viable!

TRAINING

- Training in hospitals, schools, colleges etc on how to cook local food.
- Train businesses, producers etc in marketing and business planning etc.

Reviewing priorities - discussion

Priority is to create enablers? (support food businesses in becoming economically viable; distribution and access to market.)

Consumer education re local produce.

Melanie- key issue is accountability to land and producers (re issue of certification).

Lucy commented that understanding the models that purchasing institutions are working on may be important and will affect whether this aspiration is a short term or long term aim. Also noted that larger purchasers work on a 'just in time' model and are used to streamlined procurement models (cant cope with lots of different deliveries and suppliers.) Government Buying Score Card- DEFRA

Scheme. Not very accessible. Legislation in some cases is moving faster than availability of local producer.

Melanie mentioned a new job that is about to be advertised re the Preston model- a 3 day a week procurement officer to talk to purchasers and suppliers. Co-ordinate markets/ distribution between growers direct to customers. Looking at Lancashire as a whole. Looking at a fleet of vans to co-ordinate delivery. AT the end of October there will be a conference- limited to 50- want 10 people to come from Lancaster District.

Priority should therefore be a local producer ring linked to appropriate sized local buyers. And support the Preston model - find out who is driving this in Lancaster City Council?

Lucy suggested we look at the Somerset model- Somerset Larder.

Lucy - Northern Food Network is in discussion and is looking to create virtuous loops of trading across the north of England (stuff grown in Lancaster traded for stuff cant grow from Hull etc.); looking at different types of food distribution; keeping it generally local.

Andrew- should develop a number if short term goals which may be achievable and several long term goals.

Could there be a shared stall at the weekly charter market? Or a van that delivers local food to different areas?

Open food network- alternative to Food Assembly model (the French franchise model has been dropped in the UK because of Brexit).

Jess- Looking at Rurban education. Working with Liverpool Uni, Lancs Business school and nutritionists etc to understand the barriers field to fork. Looking at new business models. Is interested in the impacts of climate change on food production. Project starts in January and will last for 2 years. Has Research Council funding. Could do student research projects? e.g. mapping who grows what?

Short term priorities

- Attend October Preston Model conference.
- Find out who is driving the Preston Model forward in Lancaster City Council and learn how SFC Lancaster can support the process.
- Create a booklet - Ethical Purchasing guidebook- on how to make educated choices around food.
- Trial one regular charter market stall that sells local produce. Run on a rotational basis by local producers.
- Lucy (Lancs Uni) to facilitate a discussion between Lancatser Univeristy and key Preston Model people.

- Create a directory of institutions that buy local food/ what to buy local food.
- Research mapping project: what is grown where and what surplus doesn't get to market (when and why).
- Research: local institutions to explore current contracts and regulations re buying and procurement criteria to understand what prevents them from procuring local food at present.
- Build links between local growers, local consumers, institutions etc...
- Training programme for producers etc

Long term priorities

- Develop a ring of small producers around the District that are mission driven and commercially viable and supply local organisations.
- Local food procurement by institutions
- FarmStart model implemented in Lancaster District.
- Paid post supports the removal of barriers retail<>distribution<>production

Who needs to be involved in making this happen?

- Planning group responsible for the Garden Village and the Canal Corridor.
- Canal Corridor action group.
- Hospital procurement- find out who from Ian Dewar?
- Whoever is responsible for the economic development portfolio at the council.
- People linked to the Preston Model e.g. Mathew Brown etc.
- Existing local growers.
- Holly Farm
- Fareshare?
- Deborah Finn
- Richard Walsh
- Lancaster Uni- Center for Global Eco Innovation
- Ethical Small Traders Association.
- Business Improvement District
- Insure fisheries
- Land Workers' Alliance
- Big land owners: Duchy, Duke of Westminster, Lancaster Uni, Churches?
- Dug Gilham (Gilhams tea room, Ulverston)
- Chamber of commerce
- Federation of businesses
- Local hospitality group?

Links to other SFC themes?

- Health
- Food economy
- Food skills
- Food and environment

What will keep today's group interested/ involved going forwards?

- Single Step wholefood cooperative - want to evolve and need to know how can support.

- Melanie- interested in a shared market stall/ other support
- Clairelousie- replicating care farm/ training/ support
- Lucy- can bring wider perspective from the Northwest- redistributing gluts.
- Rod- harnessing enthusiasm. What's the hook?
- Chris- FarmStart

Agreed to keep on meeting as a group to continue this discussion/ oversee this work.

Next meeting: 5th November 10:30 - 12:30