

# The University of Edinburgh

## ***Towards a Sustainable Food Policy***

### **Background**

As a global institution, the University has a responsibility to take a leadership position in its policy and response to challenges surrounding the unsustainability of the current global food system.

Building on work already done within Accommodation Services, as well as staff and student initiatives such as the Food for Life Catering Mark, the University will further contribute to the creation of sustainable food systems through the implementation of its Sustainable Food Policy.

### **Context**

The drafting of a sustainable food policy was motivated by internal and external factors.

#### **External factors:**

1. A number of Russell Group Universities have already endorsed and begun implementing sustainable food policies
2. The global food system – which is unsustainable in its current form<sup>1</sup> – has a number of negative socio-ecological effects interconnected with other global challenges including:
  - a. contributing to climate change, pollution, resource and biodiversity depletion<sup>2</sup>
  - b. causing unnecessary suffering to humans (poor working conditions; lowered well-being; malnutrition, obesity and hunger; and other diseases and illnesses) and animals<sup>3</sup>
  - c. a lack of awareness about where food comes from, and in many places, a decreasing importance of food in culture and a loss of community and familial ties
3. Edible Edinburgh which aims to turn Edinburgh into a Sustainable Food City
4. Legally-binding targets such as the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, as food system accounts for 19-29% of total greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Internal factors:**

1. UoE's vision, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2012-16, is to 'be a truly global university benefiting society as a whole'. Responding to global challenges surrounding food would be one way of contributing to society.
2. The Policy would build on previous work done in this area including:
  - a. significant achievements made by Accommodation Services (Appendix B) including:
    - achieving a Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark for the John McIntyre Centre at Pollock Halls in 2012 and for 12 catering outlets across campus in 2014
    - introduced cook school for students in University accommodation
    - a deal with Just Trading Scotland which ensures that rice consumed at the University comes from fair trade sustainable sources in Malawi
    - becoming the first "Food For The Brain" University in the UK
  - b. SRS cooking workshops in self-catered accommodation
  - c. the establishment of FRiED (Food Research in Edinburgh), an academic food network.

## **University of Edinburgh Sustainable Food Policy [DRAFT]**

Recognising the responsibility and influence of the University as a global institution and the interconnectedness of global challenges surrounding food and the unsustainability of much of the current global food system, the University will contribute to the improvement of society as a whole through the creation of sustainable food systems.

This policy builds on the great work done by Accommodation Services and by research teams, as well as recent student and staff initiatives such as the Food for Life Catering Mark.

### ***Our Vision for Sustainable Food Systems***

Setting our sights beyond sustainable food provision, the University aims to contribute to the creation of wider sustainable food systems and to create its own sustainable food system. These are systems where the ways in which food is produced, purchased, consumed and disposed of, sustain and regenerate the earth system they depend on and the people dependent upon them.

These sustainable food systems operate within the biophysical limits of a finite earth<sup>4</sup> by:

1. Maintaining or improving biodiversity for resilience and stability<sup>6</sup>
2. Regenerating renewable resources faster than it depletes them and only utilizing renewable and reusable resources<sup>7</sup> – current noncompliance includes depleted soils<sup>8</sup> and fossil fuels reliance<sup>19</sup>
3. Polluting no faster than the earth system can absorb it or render it harmless<sup>7</sup> – current noncompliance includes climate change<sup>4</sup>, yet sustainable food systems can contribute to mitigation<sup>10</sup>
4. Preventing unnecessary animal suffering<sup>11</sup>.

These sustainable food systems also sustain the people dependent on them by:

- Providing healthy, safe and nutritious and culturally adequate food of consistently sufficient quality, quantity and diversity in a way that is resilient to change<sup>12</sup>
- Generating livelihoods with living incomes and decent working conditions throughout these systems<sup>13</sup>
- Fostering well-being and solidarity by strengthening social ties<sup>13</sup>
- Creating societal awareness, capacity and motivation to continually improve these systems.

All of the above conditions are equitably distributed, creating justice and decreasing inequality<sup>13</sup>.

These adaptive systems also incorporate research to diagnose and solve their own unsustainabilities arising from changing conditions and new knowledge.

### ***Our approaches to achieve this vision include:***

- sourcing local, seasonal, fair trade<sup>13</sup>, high welfare and agro-ecologically<sup>14</sup> produced food, increasing intake of fruit, vegetables, pulses and whole grains, and reducing food from animal origins<sup>15</sup>
- minimising packaging and waste to landfill while maximizing nutrient and material recycling
- emphasizing intrinsic over market values<sup>16</sup> and collaboration in procurement

### ***Review and Implementation***

Progress towards this vision will be ensured by embedding this policy in the University's annual Social Responsibility and Sustainability Implementation Plans and, through working with relevant partners in the University, in their implementation plans.

A statement of progress reporting on the many work streams will be published annually to identify overall progress and inform next steps. While vision-based policies such as this one aren't time-bound, they need to be reviewed to embody the most up-to-date knowledge and understanding, especially in this case given research identifying new unsustainabilities. The Department for SRS will facilitate a multi-stakeholder review every 5 years.

## **Appendix A: Accommodation Services (AS) Statement on Catering Sustainability, Food Sourcing, Animal Welfare and Fair Trade – May 2014 Update**

Accommodation Services catering have adopted a strategic healthy food and sustainability agenda.

### **Healthy Food**

All catering outlets hold the “*Healthy Living Award*” which is managed by NHS Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. See: <http://www.healthylivingaward.co.uk/>

In addition the University has achieved the “*Food For The Brain*” award for the past 7 years and was the first University in the UK to achieve this. [http://www.foodforthebrain.org/content.asp?id\\_Content=1](http://www.foodforthebrain.org/content.asp?id_Content=1)

### **Sustainability**

Accommodation Services holds the “*Food for Life Catering Mark*” at Bronze level for all student meals served in catered halls, this includes over 750,000 meals served over the academic year, as well as for 12 catering retail outlets on campus, which adds an additional 115,000 items.

As of February 2014, the University of Edinburgh Accounted for 9% of all Food For Life Certified meals consumed in Scotland. See: [www.soilassociation.org/foodforlifescotland/cateringmark](http://www.soilassociation.org/foodforlifescotland/cateringmark)

In 2014 the University achieved the “*Good Egg Award*” in recognition of its commitment to use only free range whole/shell eggs across 100% of our catering. The strategic decision to switch all shelled eggs to free range was made over six years ago; 285,000 shelled eggs are used annually.

See: [www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/awards/good-egg-award/](http://www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/awards/good-egg-award/)

### **Sustainability in Catering Procurement, Supply and Waste Management**

We will look where financially feasible at a range of sustainability actions in our procurement and waste management to include:

- Reduction in food miles
- Food seasonality
- Local Produce with commitment to provenance
- All meat is Farm Assured
- Fairtrade\ethical foods (note: sometimes trade-off impact on food miles)
- Full commitment to recycling in compliance with the Scottish Food Waste Regulations January 2014 – all food waste is segregated from mixed recyclables, and general waste / landfill

There is commitment to collaborative procurement with other public sector organizations and food contracts both at a UK and Scotland Level, therefore it is only possible to move away from these contracts to support sustainability initiatives where there is a direct benefit to the institution and a “Single Source Justification” can be demonstrated.

### **Current Catering Procurement Activity in the University (February 2014)**

**National Contracts:** UK Level – The University Caterers Organisation Ltd (TUCO)

These are the largest agreements and offer the most competitive prices

- Grocery, Provisions & Chilled Foods, sourcing fair-trade products where financially viable
- Alcohol
- Confectionery
- Water Coolers
- Vending
- Chemicals
- Sandwiches
- Disposables & Kitchen Chemicals
- Soft Drinks, Fruit Juice Concentrate , Associated Products & Services
- Catering Light Equipment

**Scottish Contracts:** Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC)

APUC have an Environmental Policy, Sustainability Policy, Supply Chain Sustainability Policy and Code of Conduct. <http://www.apuc-scot.ac.uk/#!/devsus>

- Meat
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Fresh Fish
- Bakery
- Milk / dairy

**Pro-active approach to sourcing food**

The majority of activity currently in reducing food miles and working with local suppliers is on Scottish contracts, but the University has also “come off” contract on certain items in order to increase sustainability / ethical progress:

- On TUCO Ltd National contracts we have one company to supply both products from the Grocery, Provisions & Chilled/Frozen Foods contract and the Disposables and Kitchen Chemicals Contract, reducing carbon footprint of deliveries
- Through dry good contract, all biscuits supplied by Walkers Shortbread are from Aberlour on Spey
- Fruit and Vegetables from supplier in Loanhead Edinburgh mostly sourced from Edinburgh and Glasgow fruit markets with balance in the main from Europe
- Milk and Dairy from a supplier in Bridge of Allan, all sourced from dairy herds from Scottish farms
- Same supplier for fish and meat based in Broxburn enables consolidation of deliveries into one vehicle. 90% of all beef is Scottish with full farm traceability. Fish is from Scottish Waters and not on the red list
- Bakery from an Edinburgh supplier
- Rice & Dahl Lentils – all fair trade and specific University-only contract: all rice from Malawi
- Fairtrade sugar sticks – 743,000 used over 2012/13
- Coffee & Tea – All Fairtrade, which is therefore the default option throughout the University. all supplied from a local company who roast, grind and distribute in Scotland. Also pay for local community group project e.g. planting of fruit orchards In 2012/13 we served as fair trade hot beverages:
  - Tea - 741,000 cups
  - Coffee – 2.1 million cups
  - Hot Chocolate – 484,000 cups
- Use a Glasgow company for organic/fair trade products including oats, seeds, muesli bars etc
- Eggs – 285,000 free range eggs from sole supplier in Northumberland
- Oil – all cooking oil is taken away to be converted to bio-diesel by Olleco see: <http://www.ollecoscotland.co.uk/>
- Fairtrade wines – supplier from the TUCO Ltd Alcohol contract. offered as a choice on the commercial division “Edinburgh First” wine list
- Specific contract with a supplier in Fife to supply bulk bag-in-box fair trade Orange Juice and Pineapple to the main Pollock Halls of residence for students and all vacations when fully commercial. 50,000 litres a year.

Ian Macaulay. Assistant Director (Catering)  
Accommodation Services  
Pollock Halls of Residence

## **Appendix B: EUSA update on Sustainable Food Agenda, From Student President Briana Pegado, July 2014**

EUSA supports the University's sustainable food policy. Yet, as we are an entirely separate and autonomous organisation, we are not bound by any University policy.

However, the sustainable food policy presented to SEAG has prompted a review of our own food policies and practices, which will be part of EUSA's environmental and ethical strategy review currently underway. This review will take place within our own internal processes through our own internal structures. Upon completion, our sustainable food policy will be embedded into our strategic plan.

Meanwhile, EUSA received the NUS Green Impact Excellence Award 2013/2014 for its contribution to sustainable projects and EUSA is in compliance with various sustainable supply certifications. Food offer, waste policy, and innovation are central to EUSA's ethos.

## **Appendix C: Fair trade**

The fair trade agenda has been central to highlighting global injustices inherent in the current global food system. It recognizes the fundamental rights of workers and strives to improve working and trading conditions for disadvantaged and marginalized producers in developing countries.

As our current food system consists of supply chains that stretch across the globe, Fairtrade has been a main avenue for tackling these often otherwise unseen inequalities and injustices.

### **Fair trade at the University**

The expansion of the fair trade agenda and its achievements in the University demonstrate that progress towards sustainable food systems has already been made by attempting to sustain people by generating livelihoods with living incomes and decent working conditions throughout supply chains. This also constitutes a fertile platform for further work towards sustainable food systems.

### **History**

In 2004, following a student vote for application, the University was granted Fairtrade status by the Fairtrade Foundation.

Later, it expanded its focus from Fairtrade to fair trade, committing to a broader understanding of fairness in trade and trade justice and to exploring a whole range of approaches to improving the livelihoods of workers around the world.

### **Policy and Strategy**

The Fair Trade Steering Group, convened by Karen Bowman, Head of Procurement, is the committee responsible for the development of the Fair Trade agenda within the University.

The newest Fair Trade Policy, endorsed by court in June 2013, was coupled with the 2013/14 Fair Trade Strategy. These documents outline and reinforce the University's commitment to: raise awareness and engage the University community in fair trade issues, support ongoing academic research in this area, and whenever possible, buy products that are produced fairly and ethically.

These objectives will be achieved by, among other things, embedding fair trade principles in University procurement practices, expanding the current range of fair trade food and beverages in catering outlets, and creating a fair trade academic network.

### **Practice**

Fair trade products have become the default in some places around the University: all tea and coffee served in meetings must be Fairtrade. Consumption of fair trade products is also encouraged in offices.

**DRAFT** following meeting of UoE Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Group, June 2014

Some of these products carry the Fairtrade label, such as a wide range of food and beverages served or sold by Accommodation Services (Edinburgh First, Catering Outlets and JMCC), including wine, fruit juice, and all tea, coffee and hot chocolate.

The University also supports initiatives not covered by a fair trade label. Just Trading Scotland (a company that is committed to fair trade values but chooses against certification due to associated costs for producers) supply Malawi rice to the University's catering services. Other non-labelled fair trade initiatives are also being explored.

## **Appendix D: Selected Research**

### **The Livewell Study - 2011**

([http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/livewell\\_report\\_jan11.pdf](http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/livewell_report_jan11.pdf))

Commissioned by WWF-UK, this study explored whether it was possible (and if so, how) to meet nutritional recommendations as well as cost and cultural acceptability standards while meeting the 2020 target of a 25% reduction in GHGEs and the 2050 target of a 70% reduction in GHGEs. This study only focused on GHGEs, leaving out other socio-ecological impacts of the food system.

Key Findings regarding meat and dairy include:

P.10 - "A diet can be achieved which meets dietary recommendations for health and the GHGE reduction targets for 2020, without eliminating all meat and dairy products. Rebalancing the UK diet in line with the Eatwell plate and reducing meat-based proteins could achieve a diet that would meet the 2020 GHGE target."

"Meeting the GHGE targets for 2050 and dietary recommendations will require a radical shift in food consumed, though it would be possible to include some meat or dairy products in very small amounts if other food in the diet were low in GHGEs."

### **What is a Sustainable Healthy Diet? - Discussion Paper, April 2014**

([www.fcrn.org.uk/sites/default/files/fcrn\\_what\\_is\\_a\\_sustainable\\_healthy\\_diet\\_final.pdf](http://www.fcrn.org.uk/sites/default/files/fcrn_what_is_a_sustainable_healthy_diet_final.pdf))

This review and summary of issues and discussions around health and environmental impacts of diets carried out by Tara Garnett of the Food Climate Research Network re-evaluates and goes beyond previous sustainable diet recommendations such as the Livewell plate.

Key findings regarding meat and dairy include:

p. 20 - "What is clear is that an environmentally sustainable level of meat production will be substantially lower than the norm for high income consumers today."

p. 31 - "A growing body of interdisciplinary evidence concludes that it is possible to devise diets that a. generate lower environmental impacts than the consumption average and that are b. broadly in line with current nutritional guidelines. "

"The lower the meat, fish and dairy content, the lower the environmental impact - and the more important it will be that reduced meat intakes are compensated for with increases in the quantity and diversity of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and legumes."

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