

SUMMER 2005 No 11

London Food Link aims to help producers, consumers and retailers make a positive choice for sustainable, local food. This means better access to affordable, high quality and seasonal food, shorter supply chains and campaigning for policies which promote a thriving local food economy and culture.

London Food Link intends to:

- establish a local food network for London
- promote a sustainable local food economy
- support new and existing food projects
- advise local and regional authorities on supporting the growth of a local food sector in London
- celebrate London's food culture

London Food Strategy addresses a city with Olympic issues

Food is not something you would immediately associate with the headlines of recent months - terrorism, the Olympics, and the G8. Yet food has fundamental links to all these issues.

Our food supply relies more and more on foreign imports that can be easily disrupted by oil shortages and terrorism, even though much of this food can be grown in this country. In the wake of the G8 summit, there is a renewed drive to tackle climate change and poverty, something that can be aided by reducing food miles and eradicating food deserts, where people cannot obtain healthy affordable food. The Olympics presents an opportunity for us to integrate local food businesses and supply chains into the new developments, and ensure that healthy food is available for everyone.



London's food system already provides a great deal for Londoners, including employment for many thousands, a vital part of the capital's economy, and world-class restaurants reflecting the capital's diverse cultures. However, it also faces significant problems and challenges. Obesity is rising, especially among children. Some do not have easy access to affordable, healthy food. Small businesses struggle to survive, and the capital's food system has a massive environmental impact.

To address these important issues, the Mayor is producing a food strategy for the capital, which will lay out a vision for food in London over the next 10 years, and in which the Mayor "aims to build on London's food strengths and tackle and improve its weaknesses". The first draft of this strategy will be launched on 14th September for public consultation. Make sure you have your say about what should be in a Food Strategy for London by filling in the online questionnaire at www.lfa.gov.uk/londonfood after september 14th.

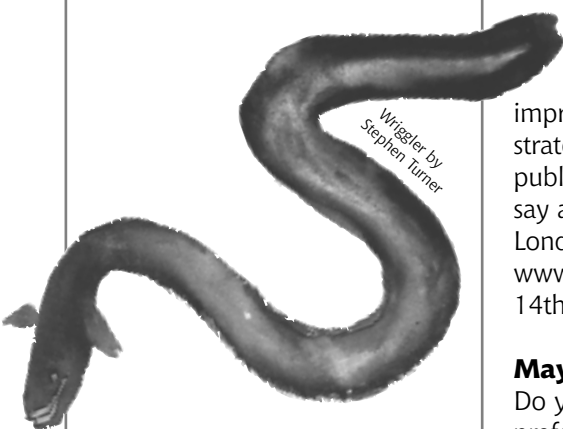
Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner

Do you think London is perfect or would you prefer it if you could buy local organic food cheaply and easily? Are you moving to the countryside or would you prefer to stay in London if your children were fed healthy meals at school? Do you work for one of London's food processors but don't get paid enough to give your family a decent meal?

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Wriggler by Stephen Turner

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Around Town

WEST

West Hampstead local food fair

Residents in the West End Lane area were treated to a delightful local food fair on Wednesday 8 June, as part of London Sustainability Weeks. Collaboration between local restaurants, Camden Friends of the Earth, and London Farmers' Markets, the early evening event was extended for a week by ten restaurants undertaking to cook special dishes using local ingredients purchased from the producers who sell every Wednesday in the car park between the O2 Centre and Homebase. Several of these moved their stalls to West End Green in the afternoon, and re-erected them alongside FoE displays and relaxing tables.



Local residents who normally go out to work during the day were thrilled to find such a beautiful event on their doorstep, and begged for regular repeat performances. To the sound of a gentle three-piece jazz band, people enjoyed barbecued meat, cheese, cakes and delicious refreshing pure apple juice, while children played with organic producer Tim Norris's egg-sorting machine.

Aidan Doyle of Walnut restaurant demonstrated interesting uses for strawberries. Is the strawberry a fruit? - No, its seeds are on the outside. Dipping them in black pepper enhances their taste while not burning your mouth. We sampled an amazing medieval strawberry and borage soup, historically believed to be helpful to honeymoon couples, as mentioned in Romeo and Juliet.

The success of this friendly collaboration could be duplicated in other areas of London. Given enough will and energy, it's possible to combine fun and gastronomy with serious messages about food miles, nutrition and big global issues.

Participating restaurants and cafes in West End Lane and Broadhurst Gardens, NW6, were:

- BAR BAR SELON, 020 7443 7796, 202 West End Lane, NW6 1SG
- BRIOCHE, 238 West End Lane, NW6 1LG
- LA BROCCA, 020 7433 1983, 273 West End Lane, NW6 1QS
- DAVID'S DELI, 020 7433 8383, 341 West End Lane, NW6 1RS
- THE GALLERY, 020 7625 9184, 190 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6 3AY
- MILLENIUM CAFE, 020 7625 3235, 192 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6 3AY
- MONTEFIORE, 020 7794 1200, 351 West End Lane, NW6 1LT
- SARRACINO, 020 7372 5889, 186 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6 3AY
- WALNUT, 020 7794 7772, 280 West End Lane, NW6 1LJ
- WET FISH CAFE, 020 7443 9222, 242 West End Lane, NW6 1LG

The Rural Regeneration Unit Food co-ops made simple!

The Rural Regeneration Unit is a UK-wide company, which helps support, develop and deliver social inclusion initiatives. At present we are in the very early stages of working with two community groups in South West London, one being City Mission Nursery and the other Harmony

Nursery school, where parents are keen to get involved and be part of a community activity where everyone can benefit.

Nearly seven years ago in Cumbria we needed to address the high rates of coronary heart disease and certain cancers that are linked to poor diets. The food worker linked this health need to supporting struggling rural businesses. Helping local communities to buy in bulk from local farmers creating local community food co-ops also reduces the distance that food travels.

Tried and tested in 88 different parts of the Country in both rural and urban communities, the co-ops are simple to organise and run. 'Members' have no paperwork or commitment to buy regularly. They can be run from schools, community centres, church halls and even pubs! Projects become totally self sufficient and fully sustainable.

The project's main aim is to connect farmers and communities, generating local employment, reducing food miles, and slimming down the distribution chain. As far as possible, affordable fruit, vegetables, meat and fish from local sources is supplied to communities throughout the UK through the development of sustainable local food distribution networks.

This is a very successful project, which has been replicated many times throughout the UK by many groups and organisations. If you would like help and advice on how to do the same in your

Strawberry and borage soup - Aidan Doyle

Garlic, celery and shallots - sweat gently; add thyme and borage (leaves flowers and stalks); then add strawberries, then vegetable stock, simmer gently.
Blitz and sieve, add seasoning to taste, cool and add crème fraiche or sour cream.

The Walnut restaurant's website is:
www.walnutwalnut.com
Aidan continues to buy from the farmers' market.



FOOD ACROSS LONDON

area in London, please contact: Sharron Rourke, project Manager on 07776 136 428 or e-mail: Sharron.rourke@rru.org.uk

NORTH

Culture Kitchen

'Culture Kitchen', the annual celebration of the 'Taste of a Better Future Network' will take place on 24 September at Capel Manor College in North London. Organised by the Women's Environmental Network (WEN), the event aims to bring together cultures, communities and cooking in a celebration of local food, grown by women and families across the UK.

WEN's local food project was set up in 2000 to support and empower Black and minority ethnic women's groups and other inner-city groups to develop their food growing skills. It recognises that such groups have little access to affordable fresh organic food or gardens of their own.

Each year, Culture Kitchen seeks to bring groups together to celebrate with spontaneous cuisine, the inner-cities' harvest season. To complement the feast there will be storytellers, artists, herbalists and fruity beauty specialists, exploring rituals and attitudes to food in different cultures. This year, the event is happening alongside the London Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens annual event, which brings London's city farms to Capel Manor. There will be a host of children's activities and advance registration offers you free entry to Capel Manor's gardens. Visit www.wen.org.uk for more information, or contact food@wen.org.uk

What we DON'T want is a supermarket

Islington Council has recently released the results of a consultation exercise on the redevelopment of Archway, North London. Although Archway is a well-loved neighbourhood, with a great mix of independent shops and restaurants, the centre of it has a number of disadvantages. For starters, the area is dominated by a hideous black tower, resulting in a wind tunnel surrounding the tube station. One of the most interesting results from the consultation, particularly to Jellied

Eel readers was the strong desire that any redevelopment should support the survival of small independent shops. In particular, there was strong opposition to the building of a supermarket. Only 38% of the respondents to the consultation questionnaire expressed a desire for a supermarket. Of the eight focus groups, made up of local residents and business owners, there was near unanimous opinion that a supermarket would be bad for the area and could destroy the existing retail outlets. As one group put it, there should be "no clone town Britain here".

Islington Council is now using the results of this consultation to draw up a series of options for the area and there will most likely be another consultation in the autumn. Hopefully, the residents will be listened to, and the Organic Health Food Shop, Yildiz Supermarket, Stagnell's Bakery and the many other local shops will have many prosperous years to come.

For more information on the Rethinking Archway Consultation and what happens next, contact Lucy Shomali on 020 7527 2381 or at lucy.shomali@islington.gov.uk. The consultation report can be found on www.islington.gov.uk.

CENTRAL

Food Standards Agency Grants

In partnership with Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Primary Care Trusts, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) will be running training to raise food safety and healthy eating awareness in primary schools. Training will be provided to both teaching and non-teaching staff and parents, giving priority to those schools with 20% or more children in receipt of free school meals, or with local Play Centres and Breakfast Clubs. For more details please contact Euan MacAuslan on 020 7341 5606 or euan.macauslan@rbkc.gov.uk

In the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, interactive drama will be used to teach children aged 14-16 the importance of healthy eating and food. Mentors from Queen Mary University Forum Theatre and the Community Dietician from Shepherds Bush Healthy Living Centre will be strategic partners.

Children will be encouraged to participate in the drama by actors who will break out of character when things go wrong and follow the advice of the audience on how to proceed. The workshops are designed to leave a lasting impression on the children involved and transform young people's attitudes to eating habits and food hygiene. For more details please contact Stephanie Needham on 020 8753 1081 or stephanie.needham@lbhf.gov.uk

SOUTH

Food Standards Agency Grants

In the London borough of Bromley one grant was awarded to healthy eating and food awareness courses for local parents and children in the Penge, Anerley and Crystal Palace wards. Run by local nutrition education specialists, the "Food Farmacy", three 6-week courses are planned to help parents and children learn about food and cooking. This is a partnership project involving local community groups, dieticians and Sure Start and forms part of local plans to tackle obesity. For more details please contact Gillian Clegg on 020 8313 4657 or gill.clegg@bromley.gov.uk

In Croydon a proposal to offer training and education to cooks in local nurseries to improve the provision of nutritious and wholesome meals to infants, to combat the potential for obesity, was successful in gaining a grant. Samples of meals provided will be taken and analysed before and after the training to analyse the fat, salt and sugar content. Information on healthy eating will be disseminated by the nurseries to parents and carers and to the wider Croydon community via local media coverage. For more details please contact Neil Alcorn on 020 8760 5768 ext. 62447 or neil.alcorn@croydon.gov.uk

London Food Link would like to thank the following volunteers for help with this issue: Suzy Edwards, Jo Foster, Francois Merode, Nikki Packham, and Jean-Baptiste Trotoux.

Bulletin

British Food Fortnight

Do you want to teach young people more about food, but do not know where to start?

This pack, which was well-received by 20,000 schools in England & Wales last year, has been updated and is available for teachers and schools. It includes lessons and activities for each curriculum subject with details of where to obtain the materials to support them; in-season recipes; plus contacts of organisations that can offer activity-based support and learning facilities to help you. There are also lots of fun ideas for nursery, primary and secondary children on how to take part in this autumn's national celebration of food.

To order your copy please email: info@britishfoodfortnight.co.uk or tel: 020 7840 9292 www.britishfoodfortnight.co.uk

Grants reward local hygiene and nutrition schemes

Four London based local authority food hygiene and nutrition initiatives have each been awarded a £10,000 grant by the Food Standards Agency. The scheme was launched by the Agency in 2003 and the first grants were awarded solely for food hygiene initiatives, but this year the scheme has been extended to incorporate projects aimed at improving nutritional standards.

The Agency recently published its 2005-2010 Strategic Plan and remains committed to reducing foodborne illness as well as encouraging consumers to choose a healthy diet. The grants will help local schemes focus on key hygiene and nutrition messages.

For more details see p2 -3 of this newsletter. See also www.food.gov.uk.

Grants available

Western Riverside Environmental Fund has grants available for projects that work with local communities to promote environmental improvements and sustainable waste management in the boroughs of Lambeth, Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea.

WREF utilises landfill tax credits and offers grants for the provision, maintenance or improvement of a public park or public amenity where it is for the protection of the environment. Grants are usually between £5,000 and £25,000. Closing dates for applications are 31st August 2005 and 28th February 2006 (final stage for second stage applications).

The fund was set up in April 1999 to utilise landfill tax credits arising from household rubbish and other waste handled by the Western Riverside Waste Authority. The fund is managed by

Groundwork UK, a national charity working to promote sustainable regeneration. To date over £1.3 million has been made available to environmental projects in the boroughs of Lambeth, Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea.

For further information and an information pack please contact: WREF Programmes Officer
Groundwork Regional Office
18-21 Morley Street, London, SE1 7QZ
Tel: 020 7922 1230
Email: laser@groundwork.org.uk

Member Feature - Fareshare

Waste Not

Fareshare has launched a campaign called No Good Food Should Be Wasted. The national food charity, which relieves food poverty by redistributing surplus food from the food and drink industry to organisations working with homeless and other vulnerable people, is working to ensure that edible food is not sent to landfill as waste.

Each adult in the UK throws away food to the value of £420 every year, and the campaign will help gain recognition and investment for FareShare and other food initiatives.

Maria Olesen, Communications Officer, explained: "We're developing a national 'task force' to lobby government, the food and waste industry and the public. This will help start a full debate on food waste throughout the food chain, and develop a range of programmes to educate and ensure food fit for purpose is recognised as useful and eaten where possible, or given priority within the waste hierarchy."

Fareshare is also encouraging funding specifically for food use initiatives, and has already gained support from more than 250 charities, local community organisations, retailers and manufacturers. The campaign also has the backing of key influencers including Lord Haskins, Simon Hughes MP, Alan Whitehead MP, Michael

Jack MP, and Austin Mitchell MP among others.

Join the debate

To support the campaign:

- Make a commitment to only 'buy what you need and eat what you buy'.
- Start composting at home, visit www.compost.org.uk for more information.
- Write to your MP and ask them to ask for a debate to ask Government to act on good food being wasted.
- Sign our on-line 'No good Food Should be Wasted' petition.
- Only buy what you need, and donate any money you save on your shopping to FareShare for its work redistributing food to disadvantaged people in local communities across the UK.
- Volunteer for a FareShare scheme in your area.

To find out more or get involved, visit www.fareshare.org.uk, call 020 7394 2468 or email Alex.green@fareshare.org.uk

Did you know?

Last year FareShare redistributed 2,000 tonnes of quality food to 250 local charities, helping to improve the health and well-being of more than 12,000 people each day.

Workplace Skills Enhancement Programme

This free training programme is designed to improve the skills of managers and directors of small and medium size enterprises, social enterprises & voluntary organisations who are based in any of London's 33 boroughs.

Employee and business needs will be identified through a skills audit that will result in individual learner action plans followed by industrially recognised certified training. A maximum of five employees per company are eligible to take part and priority will be given to those companies that demonstrate a clear commitment to completing all elements of the programme.

For more information, contact Simon Doff on 020 7133 2423 and s.doff@londonmet.ac.uk

What is the cost of cheap herbicides?

Professor Tyrone Hayes has carried out groundbreaking research showing that low levels of a widely-used weed killer have a potent effect on the hormonal system.

Worryingly, an increasing number of pesticides are found to have these endocrine-disrupting effects. In humans, atrazine exposure is associated with decreased fertility and an increased risk of prostate cancer in men and an increase in breast cancer in women.

In this year's Rachel Carson Memorial Lecture, run by Pesticide Action Network UK, Professor Hayes will explore the effects of pesticides such as atrazine, and ask how much regulators are probing behind the industry-funded studies put forward to support their products. With decreasing public funding available for research, how will the independent voice of science protect the public?

Tyrone Hayes is Professor of developmental endocrinology at the University of California, Berkeley. In July 2005 he received the Jennifer Altman Foundation 'Upstream Fund' Award, which honours the pursuit of science in the public interest.

The lecture will be held at Middle Temple Hall, London on 1 December 2005, to coincide with the annual 'Day of no

pesticide use' in memory of the victims of Bhopal. With places limited to 270, early booking is advisable. Tickets are £30 or £25 if booked by 31 October. Events start at 6.30pm and will include a delicious organic buffet with wine, exhibitions and music.

Contact: Anna Scalera 020 7065 0905 annascalera@pan-uk.org. PAN UK, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4JX www.pan-uk.org

Local Works

Over the last decade thousands of local shops and grocers have been closed. This is part of a trend of community decline that can also be seen affecting post offices, bank branches, newsagents, parks and other local services and facilities. Communities, often the elderly and the less well off, suffer as a result.

Although this situation is acute in rural areas and smaller towns, London has also suffered greatly. Often it is the knock-on effect that hurts local communities the most. The closure of a bank branch or post office often leads to less people walking and hence less trade for local shops. To add to this, most independent London shops operate on small profit margins and so a slight decline in business sees them close down.

Local Works is aiming to reverse this situation by campaigning for the Sustainable Communities Bill. The Bill will give local authorities and, ultimately, local communities greater powers on local development such as planning, transport and waste management. The idea behind this is that active local citizens rather than central government should decide how the places where they live are developed.

To succeed in making the Bill law the campaign will need huge support, as this is a radical Bill. Local Works already has 6,000 supporters but thousands more are needed. Supporters are requested to take action every few months such as writing to your MP, which takes no more than 15 minutes. Joining is free and you can do so online at www.localworks.org, or by writing to the campaign office - Local Works, 94 White Lion St, London N1 9PF

Diary

14th September

Farmers Market consultation - page 6

Also 14th September

Draft London Food Strategy Launch, City Hall

19th September

Food Access consultation event - page 6

24th September

Culture Kitchen, Capel Manor College - page 3

1st December

Rachel Carson Memorial lecture, Middle Temple Hall - page 5

LSE Housing

The London School of Economics and Political Science has published a useful guide on developing neighbourhood projects. *The 7 stages of developing a neighbourhood project* is a new guide for community groups or people working with community groups. The guide is a short basic introduction to the 7 stages groups go through to get neighbourhood projects running, and is relevant for lots of different community projects. Getting a project started can be a long and frustrating process. The guide is designed to support people through this, share common problems, and get ideas and inspiration for where to go for help. Each stage has information on what to expect and common challenges, ideas for what to do, sources of help and organisations.

The guide was developed based on over seven years of hands-on work and research with community groups around the UK, drawing on real life experiences. The guide was tested with community volunteers. Copies can be downloaded for free from www.lse.ac.uk/LSEHousing. Copies are also available from:

- Community Development Foundation, 60 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2AG tel: 020 7 226 5375 www.cdf.org.uk
- Trafford Hall, home of the National Tenants Resource Centre, Ince lane, Wimbolds Trafford, Chester, CH2 4JP tel: 01244 300 246 www.traffordhall.com

London Food Strategy

continued from page 1

To ensure that the strategy addresses the issues that are important to you, and leads to action that improves food in London, London Food Link is carrying out an extensive consultation (for the London Development Agency).

Key proposals in the strategy include:

- Supporting independent shops like grocers, butchers and bakers
- High profile advertising campaigns, based on successful similar campaigns, including healthy foods and safe drinking
- Testing a 'reward card' scheme or other incentives to encourage healthy and environmental friendly food choices
- Creating more opportunities for people to grow food
- Involving large retailers in promoting healthy eating choices
- Encouraging and supporting more cooking and food education in schools
- Improving the quality of school meals, targeting barriers such as lack of training, facilities, political support and inadequate budgets
- Improving access to healthy food in schools; for example healthy vending machines, expanding school breakfast clubs, and changing the nature of advertising aimed at children to promote more healthy eating
- Establishing kitchen waste collection schemes
- Testing initiatives with major retailers in London to reduce packaging, including charging for plastic bags

Food affects you, and so will the London Food Strategy. There is a lot at stake so make sure you have your say: What if a clamp down on illegal workers means your favourite local restaurant closes? Who cares if some people can't afford healthy food? Does your business want to sell GM food in London and should you be allowed to? How can we make sure schools provide healthy food for kids? What if they don't want it? Should retailers be forced to stop selling sugary and salty foods, or is that an infringement of civil liberties?

An apple a day is good for you and most of us eat apples all year round - but where do they come from? And what are the environmental costs? Should we only be allowed apples during the short UK season?

These are just some of the questions we will be thinking about at a number of events across the city where Londoners from each stage of the food chain can tell us what they think of the strategy. We will be asking everyone affected by food in London, including farmers, retailers, government, consumers and chefs in and around London what the strategy can do for them. The first draft of this strategy will be launched in September, and the public consultation will run until the end of November. A list of the forthcoming public events along with the strategy, summary and consultation questionnaire are all available at www.lda.gov.uk/londonfood and www.londonfoodlink.org.

Please contact Ben Reynolds, Alice Elliott or Jake Elster-Jones on 0207 837 1228 or ben@sustainweb.org for more information.

STAGE 1 - PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Food purchasing, particularly by the public sector, will contribute to a vibrant and sustainable farming sector in the UK and beyond.

Proposals include:

- Increase organic food production within London and the surrounding regions
- Make London a GM free city
- Increase food production within London

Look out for: The launch of the *Farming in the Green Belt* report at Swiss Cottage Market, September 14th

STAGE 8 - DISPOSAL

London will take responsibility for its food waste, through recycling, waste minimisation and reducing litter.

Proposals include:

- Encourage composting schemes for commercial waste
- Campaign to persuade Londoners to take personal responsibility for waste and litter.

Look out for: The food waste event in October

STAGE 7 - EATING & CONSUMPTION

Everyone will be aware that what they eat affects their own health and the wider world, and will have the ability to put that knowledge into practice.

Proposals include:

- Increase pregnancy/infant advice & support
- Increase the number of children eating school meals
- Raise awareness of the seasonal, local and quality aspects of food, and promote the concept of "slow food"

Look out for: The school food event in November.

National Training Programme for Community Food Workers August - November 2005

The Programme is designed for anyone who has an interest in community food working and is accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN).

The London Food Strategy

"from growing it to throwing it"

STAGE 2 - PROCESSING & MANUFACTURING

London's role is to expect and specify high standards from processors based outside the capital and within London itself.

Proposals include:

- Provide support on sustainable product innovation
- Provide training/skills programmes

STAGE 3 - TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

London's distribution infrastructure will be environmentally efficient and socially just as well as economically efficient.

Proposals include:

- Support improvements in vehicle efficiency and use of alternative fuels & technologies
- Establish local food distribution/wholesaling hubs
- Develop and promote more effective labelling schemes

Look out for: Our event in October where we will explore local food infrastructure

STAGE 4 - FOOD RETAIL

Selling food in London will have a positive role in creating a sustainable food system in London. We will be talking to planning bodies, retailers, wholesalers and restaurants in order to get everybody working together.

Proposals include:

- Support skills & training programmes in the retail and catering sectors.
- Integrate food within mainstream tourism strategies
- Expand direct selling between producers and consumers

STAGE 5 - PURCHASING FOOD

Purchasing decisions by the public and private sectors, and individuals, will support a sustainable food system.

Proposals include:

- Enlist retailer assistance in promoting healthy eating.
- Establish/promote private procurement support services.

Look out for: The sustainable food in the public sector event in November.

STAGE 6 - PREPARATION, STORAGE & COOKING

More Londoners will be in a better position to prepare and cook their own food.

Proposals include:

- Increase & improve cooking & food education in schools
- Provide training, information and guidance for cooks

Look out for: We are linking up with many sub-regional food networks to make sure London and its surrounding boroughs are all working together on a variety of food issues.

The 8 stages follow the framework of the proposed strategy. For the full draft strategy, summary and questionnaire, and more information on forthcoming events, please go to www.londonfoodlink.org or <http://www.lda.gov.uk/londonfood>



Each unit runs for four days at:

Grassroots, Memorial Recreational Ground
Memorial Avenue, London E15 3DB.

For more information or an enrolment form please contact:

Kate Lucas, National Training Programme Manager.
Tel: 020 7511 9014. kate@community-food-enterprise.org.uk
www.community-food-enterprise.org.uk

Sustainable food in multi-cultural communities

Mixed tastes to last

"You are about to enter a city brimming with culinary and cultural possibilities," was Gourmet magazine's (influential American food publication) opinion of London. But when we eat outside the home, must we sacrifice the careful sustainable choices made when buying the food we eat in?

The total UK ethnic food market in 2003 had an estimated retail value of £1.25 billion. London's 12,000 catering establishments serve food from over 70 different countries, creating niche growth opportunities for ethnic food producers and the food supply chain serving London. There is an opportunity to increase the proportion of sustainable food consumed by Londoners by researching the feasibility of getting ethnic food-sector businesses to include sustainable food.

London Food Link's new project, **Sustainable food in Multi-cultural Communities**, funded by Defra's Environmental Action Fund (EAF) aims to discover the awareness of and consumer demand for sustainable food that already exists within multi-cultural communities. At events such as the London Brent Multi-cultural Fair and The Asian Health Agency's (TAHA) Health, Environment & Sustainable living for Asian communities, we have been asking:

- what are the sustainability needs of the community?
- which sustainability criteria are community priorities?
- where can individuals get credible and useable information?

It's clear from attending meetings of the London Islamic Network for the Environment (LINE) and the Black Environment Network (BEN) conference that different communities define their sustainability needs in a variety of ways. By negotiating with faith groups, community sustainable development projects, and food-sector businesses already including sustainable food, London Food Link (LFL) can reach and influence many individuals across London. For example LFL attended the founding meeting of ASLI, the Asian Sustainable Living Initiative, launched by The Asian Health Agency. The members represent organisations improving the health and well-being of multi-cultural urban communities across the UK. Working together to improve the availability of

sustainable food through local shops and market stalls should ensure that ASLI members won't go hungry! With the help of ASLI members, LFL will set up a localised Asian food network to promote the benefits of sustainable food and share the knowledge and experience of community projects growing and cooking their own.

The Caribbean Cuisine Consortium is launching the first Caribbean Food & Drink magazine promoting the quality and diversity of regional island cuisine. LFL has been offered a monthly column to raise awareness of sustainable food, what it means and how to get it. At the Caribbean Food & Drink Conference, issues around Afro-Caribbean allergies to conventionally grown produce and the veracity of the Fair Trade standard were discussed. Our first column debates the pros and cons of Fair Trade for Caribbean islanders.

The London Development Agency's Inspiring Innovation project, provided finally, by *oneLondon* to support black and minority ethnic food sector companies, explore their creative potential and expand their business, has invited LFL to host a seminar "Sustainability as innovative economic driver" in January. This seminar will emphasise ways in which sustainable business practices not only minimise environmental damage but also increase efficiency and decrease costs. Speakers from Envirowise and London Remade will promote free environmental advice services that go straight to the bottom line.

For more information contact Miss Zeenat Anjari at London Food Link on 020 7837 1228, zeenat@sustainweb.org

Further information: www.taha.org.uk, www.ben-network.co.uk
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LINE_meetings/



Zeenat Anjari talks to Pardeep Singh Rai at the West London Green Festival.

Allotment Slot

Being a follower and fan of William Cobbett, known nowadays mainly for his book *Rural Rides*, but in fact the writer of over 4 million words of polemic, books, and a weekly newspaper, I do believe in preaching what we practice. And I believe the allotment movement has been far too inward looking. So the Acton Gardening Association (a posh name for an allotment society that) survived, after having fought the dreaded and wealthy Health Emporium Park Club for our mere survival, with slogans like "Join A Real Health Club. Get An Allotment". So we gave our experience to a local estate fighting for sports facilities. They won too. Great. I believe in empowering the people.

Why aren't farmers markets brought onto our estates? Families don't want to eat shit just because they are not middle class! So now we have been asked by the estate if we can provide a polytunnel to introduce people to gardening, and bring on plants they could plant in window boxes or on their balconies. Even more experimental is an idea floated with Hammersmith

and Fulham Youth Offending team about a polytunnel for young offenders, who may hate gardening and the outdoors, but could get quick results and achievement in the warmth of a polytunnel. Here endeth the first lesson.

As for life on our site the chickens have arrived. Fourteen beautiful Rhode Island Red Crosses with cream tail feathers, from a farm outside Guildford. I changed the rules to allow chickens, but not cockerels because they start crowing at dawn. Addis, originally from Fiji, has spent two years preparing their living emporium. Now we all go and admire them. Of course, we are waiting for him to give us some eggs. Italians Benito and Paulo have a few the other end of the site, and the eggs have golden yellow yolks. All you need is an omelette and a glass of wine. William Cobbett would have liked the glass of wine!

Michael Wale



More than just a lark in the Lothians

Ben Reynolds looks at London Food Link's first project exchange.

I wasn't sure how the exchange between London and Edinburgh would work, but it was a resounding success, and remarkably easy to organise. This probably had a lot to do with the Scottish Community Diet Project, which does a brilliant job of organising these exchanges regularly. Success was also due to the enthusiasm of the many people running food projects in both communities.

Participants travelled to London in March, and the return trip to Edinburgh took place in June. Their diaries showed how pleased everyone was with the range of projects visited, including food co-ops, vans and community cafés and pubs. People also said it was useful to see the projects in action rather than hearing about them second hand.

Visits started with people working in the different communities, and built up to a talk from the Scottish Executive, which put their work in its wider context. Tellingly, a lot of people mentioned how useful it was to spend time with other organisations from their home areas, which helpfully supports my case for more socials!

Another interesting point was a difference between funding for the projects in the two capital cities. In Edinburgh and the Lothians, there is a more consistent commitment from the Government to fund the projects, whereas the London groups felt they were victims of short-termism, with many projects struggling when, after two years, funding went elsewhere. As a result, many London projects were much more keenly aware



London Food Link larking in the Lothians!

about of the need to raise some of their income from selling produce - the social enterprise model.

The most useful part of the trip, for me at least, was the time spent evaluating the exchange. We only decided to do this at the end of the final session, but would now advise anyone planning such an exchange to allow time at the end to evaluate how it went, how it could be improved on, and whether it was worth organising.

In light of the successful London-Edinburgh story, we are thinking about running exchanges with other cities, so ideas on a postcard please... (see page 1 for contact details).

Ben Reynolds

Staffordshire cracks food access mapping

Kath Dalmeny, Policy Officer for the Food Commission, looks at how Staffordshire County Council has found a new way to help improve access to healthy food for low-income communities.

Local authorities or food projects face many hurdles when they tackle access to fresh food. People on low incomes can find it difficult to afford good food every day, or even to get to shops which sell fresh and healthy food such as fruit and vegetables. They can be thwarted by practical and environmental problems where there is poor provision of shops, shopping arcades are rundown, public transport links are poor, or there is a high crime rate. These issues can be especially challenging for single-parent families or older people living on their own, who might have both financial and mobility problems.

When trade falls due to competition from major retailers, smaller shopkeepers in local communities can also suffer, as they find it difficult to attract "economically active" householders. People without cars can face the prospect of dwindling food choices from increasingly expensive long-life processed food sold at corner shops. In the long term, such trends have an adverse effect on local economies, as well as on people's health.

Finding a fix

This complex and multi-layered nature of food access problems makes it difficult for health promotion workers and planners to make the case for intervention. They need convincing evidence to show that taking specific action really will make a difference to people's lives. Short of walking the streets and surveying everyone in a locality, how can local authorities and health promotion workers identify areas likely to be most at risk of food access problems? How can they work out which problem needs to be addressed most urgently in each area? How can they monitor the situation as it changes, and register concern at the loss of a shop that might be the last serving a poor community with fresh food? And how can the problems be presented clearly to those who need to take action, including planners, transport providers, retailers, food project organisers and social workers?

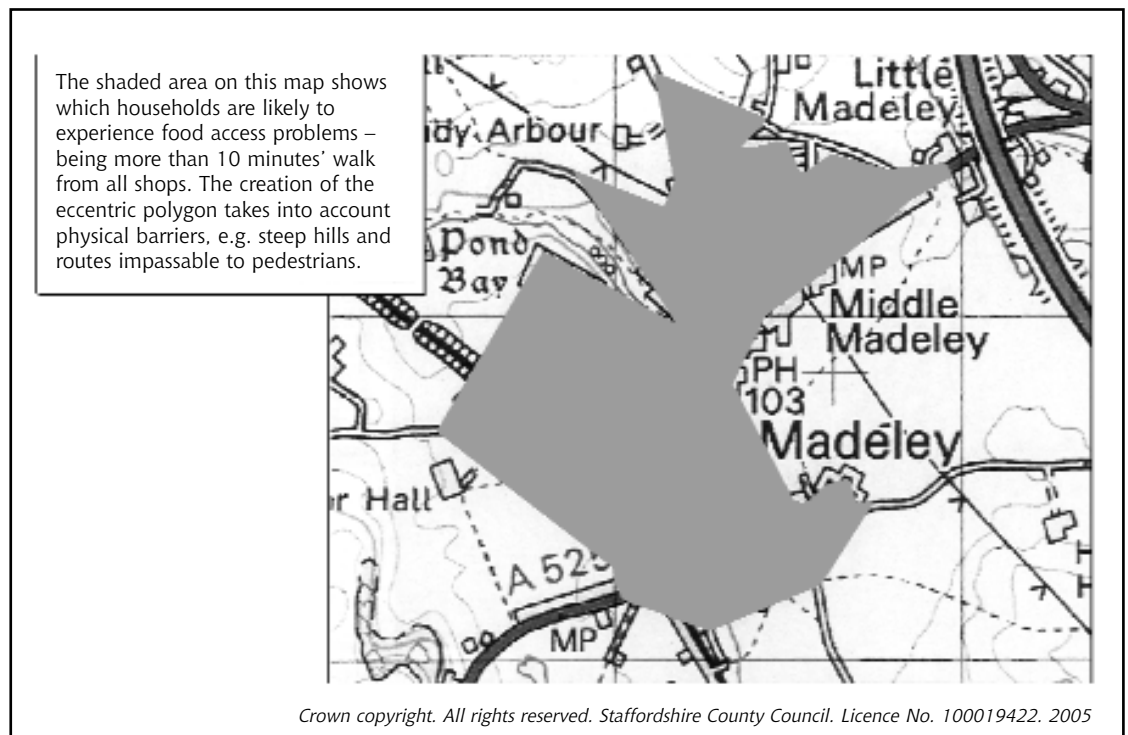
Working with the National Consumer Council, Staffordshire County Council has come up with a tool that can help local

authorities identify areas likely to be at high risk of food access problems. Staffordshire has applied familiar techniques in a way that gives new insight into the experiences of people who find it difficult to get good food.

The tool uses Geographical Information Systems (GIS) computer software to analyse geographical and socio-economic data and to present it as a multi-layered map. Overlaying the information on a map links numerical data to geographical locations, showing it in a graphical format. For example, areas where many households are occupied by older people living on their own can be highlighted. Adding another layer of GIS data might highlight areas with a high proportion of households without a vehicle (van or car). Another layer might show areas with many households with low economic activity. Much of this is data routinely collected at local and national level.

Although no single factor will mean that people living in an area automatically lack access to food, where highlighted areas overlap, communities might experience several of the problems linked with poor access. Planners and health promotion workers can then be alerted to areas that might need special attention and intervention.

Staffordshire County Council has added detailed information about services such as bus routes, bus stops and food shops to the GIS mapping tool. A larger shaded area then represents the residential area from which people have easy access to food shopping – a "zone of influence" of the food shop. The council has also taken into account how walkable distances



are, looking at physical aspects such as dangerous road crossings, steep hills, footpaths and rights of way. The resulting "zone of influence" looks like an eccentric polygon (known as an isochrone), giving a graphical representation of the residential area likely to have reasonable access to food shops, or to public transport services linking residents to those shops.

The map makes it clear which people, living in particular streets and houses, are likely to face problems obtaining healthy and affordable food. They live in the households outside the isochrone area, which are also highlighted by the food access indicator tool as experiencing any of the socio-economic factors that can contribute to the problem.

Planners could experiment with several ways of approaching the problem, using the map as a starting point. Might adding a bus stop or changing bus services alleviate the problems for a particular street of households experiencing food access problems due to low incomes? Or where there is a high

proportion of older people, would a low-cost food delivery scheme or lunch club help?

Perhaps because the project is led by dietitian Nicola Day, health promotion staff have also incorporated information on the types of food shops operating in the areas under scrutiny. Staffordshire staff have developed a measure of the all-round 'healthiness' and 'affordability' of food, and whether or not someone on a low income would be able to afford a healthy diet from the food available in nearby shops.

Policy-makers can use the powerful food access indicator tool to understand more about the difficulties people experience shopping for foods, and to make plans to change things for the better, in a highly targeted and practical way.

If you're interested in joining a meeting with Nicola and London Food Link, contact Ben Reynolds on 0207 837 1228.

Hospital Food Project

Hospital menu comes up trumps

More than 10 per cent of the food served to patients at the Royal Brompton hospital is now local, organic or both.

The hospital reached its target six months ahead of schedule, as part of Sustain's London Food Link Hospital Food Project. Run in Partnership with the Soil Association, it aims to increase the amount of local and/or organic food served in four London NHS hospitals to 10 per cent of their routine catering.

A co-operative group in Kent now supplies the Royal Brompton with a wide range of fruit and vegetables, including strawberries, tomatoes grown using biological controls rather than pesticides, asparagus and potatoes. The groceries, along with free range eggs, are delivered by a bio-diesel fuelled van. Other products being supplied include organic oatmeal, fruit juices, dried fruit, organic beef and organic milk.

London Food Link's Emma Hockridge Hockridge said: "The hospitals within the project are enthusiastic about the scheme, and others have shown a great deal of interest in becoming involved. All major sites in the South London and Maudsley trust are now working towards the project's aims, as is Harefield Hospital."

Weighing up the project

Studies on the project's economic and health effects are making good progress, with the evaluation's first phase now complete. The second phase, to gauge the response of patients, staff and visitors at the Royal Brompton hospital, will begin in September.

An economic evaluation is currently comparing the effects of the new sustainable supply chains on local economies within existing supply chains.

The Hospital Food Project is supported under the England Rural Development Programme by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. The King's Fund also provides a grant to help with the project.

Spreading the word

Catering managers recently learnt about Sustain's "Good food on the public plate" manual during an event held by London Food Link. It covered areas such as alterations required for contracts and positive examples from around Europe.

And during a recent working party meeting, delegates discussed the future direction of the project, including plans to extend the pilot to an entire strategic health authority, and ways in which a local food centre could benefit similar projects in future.

People from as far away as Scotland and Northern Ireland have attended the well-received "replication network". The group offers information and advice to support projects providing sustainable food for hospitals around the country.

Links have also been made with a variety of other organisations and initiatives, including the NGO "healthcare without harm", and the transatlantic procurement project "food for health, learning and livelihoods".

For more information contact Emma Hockridge at Sustain on 020 7837 1228, or emma@sustainweb.org.

Reading for a Book-Eel

New book to get kids cooking

Children can whip up a lasagna or pudding for the whole family using colourful and fun recipes, thanks to *The Kids' Cook Book*, out now.

The Kids' Cookery School recently published the cookery book to help children prepare and cook delicious meals on a budget. The Acton-based charity put together recipes which use fresh ingredients for a healthier and more balanced diet.

A bright and practical design, featuring original and clear icon illustrations and a minimum of text, takes readers step-by-step through a range of delicious family recipes. The book is priced at just £4.99, with all profits from sales going to The Kids' Cookery School (KCS) to fund the building of new schools.

To order a copy, visit www.thekidscookbook.com or contact the KCS on 020 8992 8882. To win a copy of 'The Kids' Cook Book', email ben@sustainweb.org telling us about one of the events you have been to this summer. The first one out of the hat wins.



Join London Food Link Now!

The benefits of membership of London Food Link include:

- *The Jellied Eel*, our quarterly members' newsletter.
- A chance to influence policy-making on food issues including contributing to food and nutrition strategies, government and GLA consultations on food, farming, planning and the economy.
- Membership of an interactive e-mail group with news, events, jobs and developments around food issues in London.
- Discounts off London Food Link events, conferences, seminars and publications.
- Access to an online members' area with membership directory.
- A free copy of *Growing Food in Cities* to new members and 50% off all London Food Link publications.



To join London Food Link or for further details contact:

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 Tel: 020 7837 1228. Fax: 020 7837 1141.
ben@sustainweb.org
www.londonfoodlink.org

London Food Link members and supporters include:

Primary Care Trusts, London boroughs, business associations, retailers, farmers, environment and community groups, food access partnerships, allotment groups and food writers. Our work is guided by a working party of key London-wide agencies and groups representing food issues from farm to fork.



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF LONDON FOOD LINK.