

# Press Release

*For Immediate Release*

## Local food links converge to turn ideas into action

Over the last ten years, local food has become of increasing interest to people as concerns about where our food comes from and how it is produced have escalated. To address these concerns, policy makers and practitioners involved with local food will converge on the Kindersley Centre in Berkshire on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November for a one-day conference, entitled *Local Food Links: Ideas into Action*. The new policy agenda for food and farming will be highlighted and examples given of how health, economic, environmental and social objectives are being delivered by local food links.

Paul Sander-Jackson, Chair of Food Links UK said “*the local food agenda is evolving fast, from analysis to action. Some policy and strategies recognise the link between the crisis in farming and the rural economy, the nation’s poor diet and long-term health problems, and the need to reconnect the food chain, producers and consumers. The analysis, rhetoric and policy may be right but how easy is it to put the ideas into action? This conference will bring together policy makers and practitioners to show what needs to happen to achieve a more sustainable food and farming system both now and in the future.*”

Speakers at the conference include Dr Caroline Lucas MEP, Green MEP for the South East of England, Jeremy Pope OBE, member of the Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group, and Baroness Sue Miller, spokesperson on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. The conference will be chaired by Prof. Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University, and it is being sponsored by the Cooperative Group, the Countryside Agency, and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The conference will also witness the launch of a joint Food Links UK and Sustain report, titled '*Feeding the Future: Policy Options for Local Food*', which sets out the many ideas generated over recent years to support the development of sustainable, local food economies, applicable at local, national, European and global levels.

James Petts, Sustain's Local Food Policy Officer and author of the report, said '*this new report will give food for thought as to the policy decisions required to help develop a sustainable food economy and culture. The conference is an ideal opportunity to launch the report and bring it to the attention of those who can bring about change.*'

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#### Editorial notes:

**Conference Partners:** Food Links UK, F3, Local Food Works, Sustain

**Conference Sponsors:** Cooperative Group, Countryside Agency, DEFRA

#### Conference aims

A one-day conference at the Kindersly Centre, Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Berkshire on 27th November 2003, to highlight the new policy agenda for food and farming and show how local food link projects can best support health, regeneration and environmental objectives.

#### Conference programme

Introduction and welcome, from chair **Professor Tim Lang**

European policy – barriers and opportunities for the local food sector **Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP**

The role of the UK Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy in supporting the local food sector **Jeremy Pope, OBE**

The role of local and regional policy in promoting sustainable food and farming **Baroness Sue Miller**

Panel discussion

Regional workshops for review of regional implementation plans for sustainable food& farming strategy

Ideas into Action - workshop sessions exploring the different ways of taking practical action, starting with the experience of one project and identifying the factors that determine success and the implications for regional and national policy

Launch of 'Feeding the Future: Policy Options for Local Food' **Paul Sander-Jackson** Chair of Food Links UK & **James Petts** of Sustain

Action informing policy - workshop feedback presented by **Charles Couzens** of f3

Chairman's closing remarks **Professor Tim Lang**

## **Feeding the Future: Policy Options for Local Food**

This joint report from Food Links UK and Sustain, which will be launched at the conference, intends to act as a point of reference and set out the many policy ideas generated over recent years to support the sector, and to stimulate policy initiatives to complement and support activities across local and regional levels. The policy options are divided into local to national, European and global options

The report and its policy options have been identified through an extensive literature review of the reports, listed in its bibliography, and from the results of a number of conferences and workshops including f3's FLAIR conferences, Sustain's Fruit and Veg conference in 2002, and the Local Food: Global Solutions conference held in 2001. The options have also been generated through close consultation with members of the Sustainable Food Chains' working party, members of Food Links UK, and key individuals working in or supporting the local food sector.

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