



Better School Dinners:

a conference on procuring local food in schools in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire

REPORT



Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Hadnock Road

Monmouth

NP25 3NG

Tel: 01600 710841

Fax: 01600 772051

Email: development@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

94 White Lion Street

London

N1 9PF

Tel: 020 7837 1228

Fax: 020 7837 1141

Email: james@sustainweb.org

Web: www.sustainweb.org

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1. Introduction

"Forget all the policy and just go for it!" - conference delegate

On 4 September, over 100 people came together to explore the benefits, issues and opportunities in sustainable, local food procurement and provision by the public sector for schools in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. The event was organised by the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, in association with adventa, Gloucestershire Food Links, and Herefordshire Food Links. The event took place at Bridges Community Centre in Monmouth.

The day began with delegates hearing about the procurement process and rules, the experience of St Peter's Primary school in Nottingham, an example of a producer group supplying local food to local schools in Wiltshire, and the work of South Gloucestershire's schools catering service. In the afternoon delegates split into groups (local authorities and support agencies, producers and suppliers, and schools) to consider what was already happening in the three counties, who was doing it, what obstacles and opportunities exist in the school meals' system, and to develop ideas to overcome these obstacles or realise the opportunities. The day ended with a plenary session involving discussions of the issues covered throughout the day.

The summaries and action plans that follow come from the presentations, discussions and ideas generated at the event. They set out to reflect and build on the views expressed by participants. In the process of writing this record, some of the language and detailed wording may have changed; however we hope that the meaning remains intact.

2. Speakers summaries

Catherine Fookes, Wye Valley AONB

Catherine welcomed delegates to the conference and gave the background to the AONB's involvement in the conference.

Around 65% of the land in the Wye Valley AONB is farmed. Typical local produce includes apples, potatoes, soft fruit, beef and lamb. Many farmers faced hardship in the area post Foot and Mouth Disease. The Curry Report recommendations encouraged farmers to get closer to the market. By looking at opportunities to supply this produce to local schools, the AONB unit can help farmers to find new markets.

The AONB unit initially chose schools to focus on as the AONB has many schools within its boundaries. By informing school children about the links between the food they eat and the landscape that provides it, they will gain an understanding of what sustains the landscape. This will help safeguard the natural beauty of the AONB in years to come.

The main aim of the conference was to bring producers, suppliers, schools and procurement officials together so that schools can source more local food.

Catherine introduced Robert Rees, the Chair of the conference, saying that we were delighted and honoured that he could spare time from his busy schedule to be our chair. He is a chef, a board member of the Food Standards Agency, an advisor to Gloucestershire Food Links and generally a great force for good in local food.

Robert Rees, Chef and Local Food Consultant

Robert Rees welcomed delegates to this stimulating and provocative conference; especially those delegates who were extremely busy organising for the start of a new school year.

Robert started by explaining his vision, and that of the conference:

- Food from Gloucestershire for Gloucestershire
- Food from Herefordshire for Herefordshire
- Food from Monmouthshire for Monmouthshire

He asked us to think about why a common sense approach to one of the most fundamental essentials in life - food - has become so complicated and difficult to implement?

By the end of today Robert suggested we would have addressed these challenges and found ways at a local level that can make a difference to our children's diets. There does need to be a reality check to improving local food procurement - *a long-term view to bring about change in local policy, development of crop diversification, improving certain skills imbalances in the catering sector and of course developing whole school approaches to food and a child's knowledge of farm to fork.*

Robert explained that Gloucestershire is starting to take that long-term view. Their proposed food vision is *creating a flexibility for contractors and local policy makers.* Immediately this has resulted in

procurement managers of Sodexo, the NHS and the County Council sitting around a table with Food Links and Taste of the West with a view to finding solutions to the challenges in a sensible, constructive and strategic way.

The word partnership is heard all too often these days and all too often it is a word that is abused. To achieve the aims of today's conference such as examining new government proposals to encourage sustainable food procurement, exploring distribution issues and legislative frameworks we cannot afford simply to pay lip service to words like partnership.

The relationships between all those involved from farm to fork must bond further and better. They must begin to understand each other's roles and individual problems before we can take substantial steps forward. Of course this may mean that you don't always agree but *by working together at a local level we can deliver standards way beyond the national remit that is right for our children in our schools.*

You will hear today a number of case studies and presentations from people involved in the issues from around the UK. What you will hear may or may not be suitable for your particular school, local authority, organisation or farm. Its all about a "*pick and mix*" approach though - take what you can and use it to influence others.

Lets not make this just another conference - lets get our teeth into it, focus on the aims and *find solutions to get us to a sustainable procurement policy in our schools.*

A school child's lunch needs to be balanced, varied, healthy and tasty - local food can do all that and more.

James Petts, Policy Officer, Sustain

"Sustainable food procurement can have huge benefits for all"

James Petts of Sustain, began his presentation by considering the benefits of purchasing and providing better and more sustainable food in the public sector. The benefits include health, economic, social, and environmental improvements including a reduction in diet related disease, more local employment, greater social identity and cohesion, and a reduction in food miles and the associated CO₂ emissions.

James then considered three issues related to public procurement and provision of food and catering: supply issues, the rules, and costs. He noted that single producers, even large farmers, would be unable to fulfil the requirements of entire public sector food contracts. This therefore creates a *need for collaboration amongst producers* to win and fulfil contracts. He also suggested there were many opportunities for primary producers to *become second or third tier suppliers* to the contract holders.

What is and what is not allowed under the public procurement rules was discussed. Here, procurement officers are not allowed to operate a local sourcing policy in contracts (such as specifying food has to be British or from within 10 miles), nor specify fair-trade or social labels in contracts. He did note, however, that much can already be done such as *specifying organic food, developing menus according*

to local availability and the seasons, encouraging suppliers to source locally and specifying additional services such as recycling, staff training, and educational elements in contracts. He also suggested there are many ways in which contractors can ensure they are not discriminating against local and smaller suppliers including *splitting contracts into lots, specifying seasonal produce, and considering the most appropriate length of the contract* depending on the product.

Finally, the issue of cost was considered to have drivers in both directions with increases occurring due to higher costs of production, and savings due to less waste and a seasonal supply. Examples from Europe had shown some increase in the cost of ingredients but these had been small and had often been compensated for by changes elsewhere.

James then went on to present two examples of good practice. He explained the example of Cornish schools where the in-house service provider had been awarded a 25-year contract to provide meals to 32 primary schools. Following a 'Buy local' campaign, 3-year contracts, totalling £350,000, had been awarded to 4 suppliers - fresh meat, groceries, frozen foods and vegetables. He then described some of the background to the Italian school meals system. This had begun in 1978 with the first school adopting a 'Mediterranean' diet, then in 1999 a new law requiring schools and hospitals to provide organic, quality, and 'typical' food was introduced. There were now numerous examples of organic school meals, many with 60-100% organic and local content.

James then noted some of the recommendations for government resulting from Sustain's research including *changing the regulations, increasing collaboration, and providing more money for sustainable ingredients and investment in the regional supply infrastructure, catering staff, facilities, and training programmes*. James ended with a look at Sustain's 'manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering' entitled *Good Food on the Public Plate* which is a comprehensive guide for anyone wishing to introduce better quality and more sustainable food and catering practices into public institutions.

Jeanette Orrey, Catering Manager, St Peter's Primary School

*"You need enthusiasm and it will be a struggle,
but it's a path worth travelling and it sure is rewarding."*

Jeanette was introduced as the catering manager of a primary school in Nottingham. She has been at the school for the past 12 years and for the last 4 years she has run the school meals' service using as much local and organic food as possible. Jeanette is also Director of Primary Choice, a company that helps schools provide children with healthy, locally sourced school meals. Jeanette began by considering two pieces of research that showed the *benefits of fresh, quality additive-free meals*. Research by Oxford University found that changing diets to exclude additives and include more wholesome food created statistically *significant improvements in the behaviour and health of adults and juveniles* whilst the Food Standards Agency found that *children that avoid food additives have significantly lower levels of behavioural problems and hyperactivity than those who don't*.

Jeanette then gave an overview of food in schools with education about nutrition, food and cooking no longer being part of the core curriculum and the British food culture being unrecognised in schools. This was said to be a missed opportunity for health education and promotion. She then described

some of the *barriers* experienced in setting up the new system *including minimal national government guidance, facilities being lost with commercial contract caterers taking over, little or no involvement of the parents and children, minimal funding for facilities and ingredients, and a cost-focused supply.* Jeanette gave figures for the uptake of school meals in the country: this ranged from 9% in Worcestershire to 54% in Northumberland, with a national average of 34%.

Jeanette went on to describe the experience of St Peter's Primary School that is a medium sized primary in Nottinghamshire. She stressed that schools must decide what is possible and realistic in their own situation. *St Peter's has 200 pupils, a vibrant kitchen, meals cost parents £1.70 a day, and the school receives no state subsidy. The uptake of meals is between 80-85%, 70p is allocated to ingredients per pupil per day* and the school spends £126 for a 2-course meal for 180 pupils per day. The reasons why the school started the process of providing better meals for its pupils were self-respect, feeling that it could do better, Jeanette wanting a challenge, and the children deserving better. As a result, the staff have regained their self-respect, more staff have been employed, the sources of food are known, and the local economy has benefited.

To initiate change talking to the headteacher, kitchen staff, governors, parents, children, local business people and visiting local farmers all helps. Changes could result in better food, fresher food, safer food, and affordable food. The process is also one of continual improvement, and St Peter's now use real crockery, tablecloths, have arranged farm visits, and kitchen staff talk to the pupils about the meals and healthy eating.

Jeanette ended by urging others to act now because children deserve better than most current provision and as adults we should know better. There is a way forward and it is up to all of us.

Les Fearn, Director, Wiltshire Regional Producers

"Producers need to reconnect with their local schools, communities and consumers"

Les talked about the farmer-owned company he has helped to establish in Wiltshire that is supplying food and catering services to local schools. The group is made up of around *25 small local farmers*, and is expanding all the time, supplying food in four product categories; meat and dairy, fruit and vegetables, jams and pickles and desserts and cakes. Members are selected on the quality of their food and abide by a strict traceability code.

Les described how *the group markets and delivers their produce collectively*, allowing them to by-pass middlemen and bid for larger catering and retail contracts, which were previously unobtainable. The group's administration and billing is centralised allowing for one invoice to be sent and one cheque to be written, saving time and effort for both purchasers and producers. By the end of October 2002, the network had won their first school meals' contract with a local primary school. Les had approached the headmaster directly and offered to supply and run the school's catering facilities. The school was keen to promote healthy school meals and help local producers. The *producer group then employed a local chef* to run the canteen and develop healthy, seasonal menus.

The cost per meal is approximately 40 pence more per day, but parents are prepared to pay the extra in the knowledge that their children are provided with fresh, regional produce. In 2003, the network

also began to supply corporate functions for the county council and other businesses, and is currently in negotiations with several other local schools. Les stressed the importance of reconnecting producers with consumers including local schools, parents and pupils and the need to provide peace of mind to the school. He also spoke about the importance of ensuring traceability, keeping standards high, and quality and supply consistent.

Kay Knight, Head of Catering and Support Services, South Gloucestershire County Council

"Embracing the principles of local purchasing has been a recipe for success for the service"

Kay began by describing how South Gloucestershire's school meals service had developed over the last five years from a failing service with a very low uptake of school meals to a profitable operation with better quality local food. Kay went on to describe more recent developments and the local purchasing initiative. The catering service is an in-house service directly managed by the Education Department serving 4 million meals per year, employing 600 staff and delivering to schools (1200), civic functions, staff, and welfare needs. The service is committed to developing the local food sector and sustainability in the community. Kay described some of the *benefits of local purchasing including the retention of money in the local economy, increased community links, reduced food miles and pollution, fresher food, and increased consumer awareness of how the food chain works.*

Some of the obstacles which the service had experienced in the course of the changes had been the limited supply from smaller producers, *a 40-week demand for food (rather than 52), an unwillingness of producers to also become distributors, and the level of bureaucracy involved.* However, the contract specifications had been developed to provide the best quality produce possible. These included the *'freshest possible to the point of delivery', sustainable products including organic, reduced packaging, a high degree of traceability, fewer additives, timely response, seasonal produce, and certain delivery windows.* These changes had led to encouraging a more localised but efficient supply of food to the service and an improvement in the quality of produce.

Kay then described some of the current initiatives undertaken by the County Council which include sourcing of fresh local beef, pork and chicken, potatoes and other vegetables. Some fruit, including organic, eggs and ice cream come from local sources. Further sources of supplies are being sought on an on-going basis. The service also 'brands' its meals' service and promotes the benefits of local produce. Messages to parents on menus are also given. Future planned initiatives include further developing local purchasing within the Community Strategy, enhancement of the 40-week window, growth in business, and greater community involvement.

3. Workshop summaries and action plans

Local authorities and support agencies

Obstacles

The local authorities and support agencies workshop identified a number of obstacles to purchasing and providing better quality and more sustainable food in Gloucestershire's, Herefordshire's and Monmouthshire's schools. These included the potential additional cost and the skill levels of both producers and caterers. It was also thought that there might be problems with the food safety requirements and consistency of availability to meet requirements with a fragmentation of providers. It was also noted that there was a lack of support and resources available to local producers, who were often unaware of the opportunities to supply the market.

Opportunities

However, the group also identified a number of opportunities. These included the potential benefits to the local economy and a greater sense of community and social cohesion which could result in a change to the policies of purchasers and providers. It was noted that there was now a political agenda to encourage sustainable procurement and provide better food in schools. Other benefits included a greater awareness of healthy eating, food miles issues, environmental benefits, and educational benefits. It was also noted that the public sector markets could result in greater collaboration amongst primary producers and encourage the diversification of farming and wildlife.

Action plan

The local authorities and support agencies group then developed action plans which were needed to both overcome the obstacles identified and to realise the opportunities. From this we can see that the first point is to establish a means of communication between interested parties. This could be through a new or existing forum, network or group, perhaps in each county. Other main points of action are to review the existing supply base and the food or catering services demanded by schools and/or county. Also for purchasers to adopt a sustainable procurement policy and to then review the procurement practice prior to the renewal of contracts, by means of self-analysis, considering the opportunities for introducing better quality and more sustainable food into the meals.

Other important points highlighted by the action plan were the need to lobby decision makers and senior staff about food in schools to gain their support, and to develop a pilot project involving a small number of schools and, if successful, to replicate the process throughout the area.

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Communication			
Establish communications between stakeholders	Establish, or use existing forum, network or group of interested parties to enable dialogue	All - Led by County Council	2004
Intelligence			
Obtain information on what food is available locally	Obtain existing or produce new directory of interested producers and suppliers in the area, and/or conduct an audit of their products in terms of quantities, standards, and forms delivered in. This could take the form of an online database available to all	Food Links/Local authorities	2003/4
Obtain information on what food/services are demanded by public sector purchasers and schools in each county	Obtain existing or produce new directory of public food purchasers and contract holders in each county, and conduct an audit of requirements. This could also take the form of an online database or briefing sheet	Local authorities	2003/4
Obtain examples of good practice and guidance for purchasers to develop sustainable procurement policies. (see below)	Obtain 'Good Food on the Public Plate' from Sustain	Local authorities	2003
Purchasing			
Adopt a sustainable procurement policy	Lobby and gain support of senior staff and councillors/governors	Enthusiastic group of individuals	2003/4
	Develop policy with input from all stakeholders	New or existing steering group/committee	2004
	Prioritise aims and actions. Finalise and get signed by senior manager, present to employees, and review regularly	New or existing steering group/committee	2004
Greater purchasing of organic, fair-trade, fresher, local, and better quality food	Consider the supplier qualification criteria, contract lengths, structure, specifications, and award criteria	Procurement officers/schools with 'Food Group'	2003/4
	Assess the opportunities and consequences of changing the food/service demanded including the available supply and cost implications	Procurement officers/schools	2004
	Make changes through a pragmatic and continual improvement approach according to priorities in sustainable procurement policy	Procurement officers/schools with 'Food Group'	2004 onwards
Catering - see Schools			
Pilot			
Provide better food in schools and learn from experience	Support a pilot project involving a small number of schools to increase amount of fresh, sustainable, 'animal friendly', and local food used in school meals	Schools, local authorities, and support agencies	2004/5
	If successful, replicate pilot process in other schools	Schools, local authorities, and support agencies	2006 onwards

"As a result of the conference I am going to hold meetings with catering managers to see what we can do now to introduce local produce" - delegate

Producers and suppliers

Obstacles

The producers and suppliers' group identified a number of obstacles to supplying schools with better quality and more sustainable food. These included the bureaucracy involved including traceability requirements, the legislation, costs which were higher than imports, the availability of supply including the types of produce and continuity. It also identified barriers of a lack of appropriate infrastructure and economies of scale for the local food sector in the area.

Opportunities

The group also identified a number of opportunities for local producers to supply quality, sustainable food to local schools. These included public awareness of the benefits of eating locally grown food including the health, environmental and educational aspects. Public sector markets were considered good, stable markets but should not be seen as the panacea for all the challenges to farming. Also, opportunities were identified through the quality and diversity of local food, and the existing cooperation amongst producers in the area.

Action plan

The producers and suppliers' group then developed action plans which were needed to both overcome the obstacles identified and to realise the opportunities. The key points in the action plan look at obtaining guidance and examples of good practice about how to supply public sector markets, as well as the communication and sharing of information with the industry, purchasers, caterers, and consumers. The group also identified a need to get a rationalisation of standards by involving trade associations and lobbying central government, and with pressure from consumers and lead bodies to persuade buying groups to purchase from small local producers. The need for good traceability and food safety systems and for efficient billing and ordering systems to make buying easy for purchasers and caterers was identified.

The group also developed actions which would encourage collaboration between producers and would develop a focal point for activities. This could take the form of shared facilities or a 'centre for local food' to jointly process, distribute, and market produce. The action plan then identified the steps required to win public sector contracts including talking with purchasers to find out the requirements, making a bid, and/or looking to becoming second or third tier suppliers to the existing contract holders.

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Making Links			
Ensure communication and coordination with others in the food chain including purchasers, caterers, and consumers	Link with new or existing groups and forums at each level including county-wide groups (see Local authorities) and individual school food groups (see Schools)	Suppliers/producers/support agencies	Ongoing
Guidance			
Obtain examples of good practice and guidance for suppliers and producers to develop supply and win public sector business	Obtain 'Good Food on the Public Plate' from Sustain	Suppliers/producers/support agencies	2003
Supply			
Develop a consistent locally-focused supply system to supply public sector markets amongst others	Develop shared, producer-owned supply, processing, distribution, and marketing facilities or centres in each county	Suppliers/producers, supported by development agencies	2004-2014
	Develop or obtain and agree standards of quality of food and production, with respect to demands of public purchasers. E.g. Red Tractor, Organic, etc.	Suppliers/producers supported by development agencies	2004-2005
	Ensure traceability and food safety requirements are met. E.g. HACCAP	Suppliers/producers supported by development agencies	2004-2005
	Develop efficient ordering, billing and record keeping systems to minimise work load of purchasers and receivers	Suppliers/producers supported by development agencies	2004-2005
Winning the business			
Bid for public sector contracts	Talk with purchasers regarding their requirements (specifications) and qualification criteria	Suppliers/producers/purchasers	2003 onwards
	Obtain an invitation to tender	Suppliers/producers	As contracts are tendered
	Prepare a bid including a supply plan, pricing, risks and contingency plan, etc.	Suppliers/producers	As contracts are tendered
	Make the bid	Suppliers/producers	By the deadline given
Or, look to becoming second or third tier suppliers to the contract holder	Talk to contract holder. Cut a deal	Suppliers/producers	Ongoing

"Contact was made at the conference which will enable tendering for a procurement contract with Cardiff City Council" - delegate

Schools

Obstacles

The schools' group identified a number of obstacles to providing better quality and more sustainable food in Gloucestershire's, Herefordshire's and Monmouthshire's schools. Initial concerns were for changing children's attitudes towards their eating habits and how, without pressure from parents, it may be difficult to convince children to accept a healthier diet. A more practical concern focused on the implementation and sustainability of such a scheme with reference to resources both from a financial and a facilities perspective. Funding, labour, overheads, indirect costs and the lack of facilities were all noted in this regard. Another point raised was the added burden that this may place on teachers who are already under pressure to meet the curriculum requirements within a tight time-scale. Again, with regard to implementation, issues of capacity, the availability of suppliers, logistics and distribution were all noted as possible obstacles to change.

Opportunities

The group also identified a number of opportunities that would result from providing schools in the local area with better quality and sustainable local food. A major issue identified was the opportunity to take a 'whole school food' approach and to develop a whole school food policy covering all areas of food in schools, with school meals being a major element within this. The potential for growth and improvement of local supplies and catering businesses was identified as a consequence of more local procurement. The opportunity to boost the general movement to improve children's diets both in the canteen and in the classroom were also recognised. Other opportunities included available training and staff awareness, potential changes in the contract specifications to help the process, and many examples of good practice already identified.

Action plan

The schools' group then developed action plans which were needed both to overcome the obstacles identified and to realise the opportunities. Many methods to encourage and enable a move by local schools to use sustainable, local food were outlined in the action plan. It was considered important to gain the support of the headteacher and governors and to have a 'champion' to push the process forwards at a top level, but also to involve parents in campaigning for better food for their children. This process could take place as part of a 'whole school approach' to food, involving the school catering, curriculum learning, the National School Fruit Scheme and Healthy School Standard, and other food related areas.

This would require the involvement or formation of an appropriate decision making body consisting of all the stakeholders - teachers, governors, parents, caterers, suppliers, etc, (called a School Food Group in the table). This group could then take the lead and develop the policy and consider taking part in a pilot project to improve the school dinners, supported by the local authority and other agencies. The group would support the catering service and staff to implement changes according to the priorities developed in the policy. This could include increasing the amount of local, organic, fair-trade, 'animal friendly' and fresh ingredients in the catering, and to invest in facilities required to process and prepare different ingredients.

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Gain support			
Gain the support of the head-teacher, catering staff, governors, parents and pupils	Talk. Lobby for change through meetings, petitions, media, research, etc.	Enthusiastic group of individuals	2003-2004
Whole School Approach			
Make explicit the links between the curriculum and food e.g. science, healthy eating, citizenship etc Develop resourcing ideas of how these issues could be linked to work in the class room	Set up County wide Food Steering Group	LEA - Children and teachers	2003-2004
Take a 'whole school approach' by bringing all food related activities together (school meals, curriculum subjects, healthy eating initiatives, vending machines, farm visits, etc)	Set up School Food Group (steering committee, working party, etc) and adopt a 'whole school food policy'. See www.Grab5.com	School community: head-teacher, teachers, governors, school caterers, parents, pupils	2004-2005
	Develop a strategy as a result of the policy to conduct the pilot as below	School Food Group	2004-2005
Pilot			
Provide better food in school and learn from experience	Consider taking part in a pilot project to increase amount of fresh, organic sustainable, 'animal friendly', and local food in the school meals	School Food Group supported by local authorities and support agencies	2004-2005
Catering			
Obtain examples of good practice and guidance for caterers to develop recipes and menus and introduce changes	Obtain 'Good Food on the Public Plate' from Sustain	School Food Group for catering service	2003-2004-
Increase the amount of fresh, sustainable, animal friendly, fairly traded, and local food in the school meals	Consider being a pilot (as above). Work with purchasers and suppliers. Use guidance and directory/audit of suppliers (see Local authorities and support agencies) to know what is available	Catering service, supported by School Food Group, local authorities and support agencies	2006
	Adopt a process of continual improvement and set realistic targets. Monitor and evaluate progress	Catering service, supported by School Food Group', local authorities and support agencies	2004 onwards
	Provide appropriate and regular training to catering staff, to ensure high skill levels and familiarity with ingredients	Catering service, supported by School Food Group, local authorities and support agencies	
Develop the catering facilities and equipment requirements in schools or at county-level	Conduct a pilot-project to develop facilities where needed	Catering service (school, contractor, in-house provider) supported by School Food Group	2004-2006
	Provide or obtain adequate investment	School Food Group/Local Authority Catering Service	2004

"I am going to collaborate with other parents to lobby for change" - delegate

4. Final plenary session

Delegates had the opportunity to feed back their thoughts and ideas for future action in a plenary session. First, Robert Rees summed up the day saying he had been impressed by the enthusiasm of delegates and the good ideas generated.

Summary of delegates' comments:

- Would be useful to have contact details of all delegates. *(These are included in this conference report)*
- Would also be useful to have a list of all organisations involved in procurement initiatives in the three counties
- The Welsh Procurement Initiative was mentioned. They are putting together an investigation into the costs of sourcing locally for a procurement department supplying schools
- Holme Lacy College suggested that catering managers needed starter kits. James Petts said that in Sustain's "Good Food on the Public Plate" manual there is information for catering managers already available
- The AONB pointed out that Advantage West Midlands are trying to encourage a pilot scheme in the area, and this would be a great opportunity for producers and schools
- We can all make a difference by responding to any Government / Assembly consultations to put forward the view that local sourcing is important
- We can also write letters to the press and lobby our own children's schools to make changes happen
- How can legislation be changed to help us more?

5. Appendix

Annex 1: Speakers presentations and biographies

Serving up Sustainability in Schools ***James Petts, Sustain***

To cover

- Benefits of sustainable, healthy food
- Procurement rules
- Supply
- Cost
- Examples
- What needs to happen now
- Recent and future developments

Benefits of sustainable food

Health

- Less diet related disease
- Less risk from effects of pesticide residues, antibiotics, genetic modification, etc
- Less incidence of food poisoning
- Environmental health effects

Economic

- Financial, cost savings
- Local economy
- External benefits, cost savings to other parts

Social

- Learning and education
- Improved social cohesion and behaviour

Environmental

- Reduced food miles, therefore CO2 emissions
- Less local pollution e.g. air pollution, nitrate run offs into watercourses, etc
- Less waste, more recycling, therefore less landfill
- Benefits to biodiversity

Provision in schools - 5 ways

- 'Central', authority managed contracts with 'in-house' authority provider
- 'Central', authority managed contracts with an outside, commercial contractor
- 'Opted-out of central contract' with the 'in-house authority provider
- 'Opted-out of central contract' with an outside commercial contractor
- 'Opted-out of central contract' but with school governors employing own staff

What we can't do in contract public procurement

- Operate a local purchasing policy
- Specify 'fair-trade' or other social labels
- Operate a quota system, e.g. for SMEs
- Apply award criteria which cannot be assessed or directly relates to subject matter
- Apply 'additional criteria' in non-tiebreak situation
- Incorporate 'external economic costs' into a Whole Life Cost analysis at award stage (unless exceptional circumstances)

What we can do under the rules

- Base menus on seasonality, traditional foods, local supply availability, and healthy eating principals
- Specify 'organic', 'traditional' (PDO, PGI, TSG), 'seasonal', 'fresh' or 'just picked',
- Ensure non-discrimination against smaller, local suppliers (lots, patchwork approach, meet the buyer days, use of variants, etc.)
- Additional services including; staff training, recycling, menu development and education
- Needs dialogue and partnership between purchasers, suppliers, and caterers

Supply issues

- Single producers too small to fulfil contracts on their own
- Needs collaboration with others
- And, links with neighbouring and regional supply chains
- May need investment in infrastructure, traceability and billing systems, integration into a catering service
- Also, opportunities to become second or third tier suppliers to contract holders

Cornish schools

- 2002, in-house service provider awarded 25-year contract to provide meals to 32 primary schools
- Difficult to get local producers/suppliers to bid for contracts
- 'Buy local' campaign and healthy eating initiatives
- Now 3-year contracts, total of £350,000 awarded to 4 suppliers - fresh meat, groceries, frozen foods and vegetables
- All won on commercial grounds within regulations

Italian schools

- 1978 - first school adopted 'Mediterranean Diet'
- 1986 - National Nutrition Institute published 'Guidelines for a Health Italian Diet'
- 1999 - new law requiring schools and hospitals to provide organic, quality, and 'typical' food
- Now, numerous examples, many with 60-100% organic, local content
- Parent run committees often highest proportion - can buy direct to keep prices competitive

Can't afford it?

- Drivers in costs both ways
- Increases with use of organic, traditional, and fair trade dependent upon product/premium
- Reductions by introducing seasonality and recipes with more moderate amounts of meat
- Reduction in cost of waste and waste disposal
- European examples generally small increases in cost of food (but started with larger budgets than UK institutions)
- Paying more now will reduce costs in future both to institutions and country

What needs to happen now?

- Changes in EU law and new UK law
- Improving pay, conditions, and skills of catering staff
- More money for sustainable ingredients and programmes to implement changes and staff training
- Adopting of sustainable procurement policies by purchasers
- Including - changes in contract structure, process, specifications and contract conditions
- Support for local food sector, collaboration between primary producers, organic food in sector, and more protected food names

Recent and future developments

- National School Fruit Scheme and National Healthy Schools Standard
- FSA/DH (secondary) and OFSTED (primary) studies looking at quality of school meals. Autumn
- DfES Action Plan for Sustainable Development, includes; sustainable food procurement (FPIG) and promotion, whole school approach, embedded into curriculum. Expected Sept 2003
- Sustain's 'Good Food on the Public Plate' - considers the benefits, how procurement works including the law, size and scope of sector, guidance, case studies, directory and toolkit.

The Way Forward

Jeanette Orrey, Catering Manager, St Peter's Primary School, Nottingham

Research shows that

Changing the diet to exclude additives and include more wholesome food has created statistically significant improvements in the behaviour of adult and juvenile behaviour and health. (Oxford Uni: 1999,2001,2002).

Research shows that

Children that avoid food additives have significantly lower levels of behavioural problems and hyperactivity than those who don't (FSA, IoW research 2002)

Lessons Lost

- Lessons about nutrition, food and cooking are no longer part of the core curriculum.
- The British food culture is not recognised or shared within the school.
- And a key opportunity for health promotion is missed.

Can We Do It ? The Issues Seem Insurmountable.

- Can we create such an intelligent, child and health focused system in the UK.
- When we have minimal national government guidance.
- Kitchens closing, contractors moving in.
- No involvement of parents or children.
- Minimal funding for facilities or meals.
- Cost focused supply.

School Meals Uptake

- In the system.
- From 9% in Worcestershire.
- To 54% in Northumberland.
- Average 34%.

Know What Is Possible.

- We are a medium sized primary school in Nottinghamshire.
- This presentation will demonstrate what we have achieved at St Peter's.
- You must decide what is realistic for you.

St Peter's Primary School

- 200 pupils
- A vibrant kitchen

- Meals cost parents £1.70p a day
- No state subsidy
- 80 to 85% uptake of meals
- 70p per pupil/day for ingredients
- £3.50/pupil/week
- £126 for a 2 course meal for 180 pupils per day

Why Did We Do It?

- Self respect.
- I knew as a team we could do better.
- The children deserve better.
- I wanted a challenge !

What the Children of St Peter's Think

Harriet Hardy. "Mrs Orrey makes my favourite lasagne and macaroni cheese."

Matthew Parker. "Apple crumble is best it makes your tonsils tingle."

Charlie Sharpe. "Mrs Orrey starts work at 6am and doesn't finish until 5pm."

Real Life

- The staff get there self respect back.
- We have taken on staff.
- There has been no cut in hours for four years.
- I know where the children's meat, milk, vegetables and potatoes are coming from.
- The community benefits.
- Local produce means local jobs.
- The local economy benefits.

Action

- Talk to the head teacher
- Talk to the kitchen staff
- Talk to the governors
- Talk to the parents
- Talk to the children
- Go and see the local farmers
- Talk to local business people

What This Means

- Better food.
- Fresh food.
- Safe food.
- Food we can afford.
- Local jobs for local people.

Change Goes on

- We now serve the meals on crockery.
- There are tablecloths on the table.
- We have lunch buddies.
- Farm visits.

- I go and talk to the children in the classroom.

We Are Still Not There

Direct Benefits

- Local producers and growers have guaranteed markets.
- Food is fresher, healthier and food miles are cut dramatically.
- Children from poorer families particularly benefit.
- Case studies prove that food is affordable (and edible!).

Happy Ending?

- We need to act now.
- Our children deserve better.
- We as adults should know better.
- There is a way forward.
- It is up to all of us.

Les Fearn, Wiltshire Regional Producers

- Established producer cooperative in Wiltshire with 25 members in 2002
- Approached local, 'opted-out' school - needed a catering service
- Employed a chef and developed menus
- Started supplying the school in October 2002
- Support from Business Links and local council
- Now linking with neighbouring producer cooperatives to fulfil demand, supplying other schools and civic hospitality functions

Local Food for Local Schools

Kay Knight, South Gloucestershire County Council

Council's stated aim:

"... to work together through the South Gloucestershire Local Food Partnership to increase the availability and consumption of local food and to promote healthy eating in South Gloucestershire."

The Council's Catering Service is an in-house service:

- Directly managed by Education Dept.
- Serving 4 million meals per year
- Employing 600 staff
- Delivering: Schools Catering; Civic Catering; Staff Catering; Welfare Catering
- Committed to developing the local food sector and promoting the trading potential of local producers and sustainability within our community

Benefits of Local Purchasing

- Money stays in local economy - supports local workforce and infrastructure
- Forges community links and promotes trading potential with local producers
- Less transport - shorter distances - reductions in emissions - reductions in packaging

- Fresh, healthy products - Change in culture - Meeting Customers' Demands
- Allows consumers to understand more about food chain - where food comes from, how it is grown etc. (Partnership-working with schools on food issues)
- Allays consumer concern about food sources - increases confidence in service - creates sustainable business environment
- Supports Local Community Plan and Council's Guiding Principles

Drawbacks

- Limited supply from small producers (depleted orchards)
- Need for positive networking/formulation of supplier co-operatives
- 40-Week Supply Chain
- Farmers are producers, not distributors
- Red Tape!

Specification for Quality

- Freshest possible to the point of delivery
- Sustainable products
- Reduced Packaging
- Highest Traceability
- Home-Kill
- Fewer Additives
- Timely Response
- Seasonal Produce
- Delivery Windows
- Meeting the Needs of the Customer

Current Initiatives

- Local fresh meat included on School menus (Beef & Pork)
- Local Fresh Chicken
- Potatoes and other vegetables sourced from locale
- Local fruit (including organic)
- Local fresh farm eggs
- Local Ice-Cream
- Accessing more produce on ongoing basis
- Spreading the word
- Branded Primary School meals service: user-friendly image to promote service
- "Brambles" branding used to promote benefits of local produce
- Access to households - messages to parents on menus on local produce; farmers markets etc.
- Extracts from Stakeholder Feedback

The Future

- Continue to develop local purchasing within Community Strategy
- Extended Schools
- Growth in Business
- Basic Skills Facilities
- Enhancement of 40-week window
- Greater Community Involvement

Speakers Biographies

Les Fearn

(Director, Wiltshire Regional Producers)

Les is a farmer and director of Wiltshire Regional Producers network. He has extensive knowledge and experience of farming in various disciplines, including livestock farming, direct sales, and quality assurance. Les helped found Wiltshire Regional Producers to develop direct links between consumers and producers. He has also previously held senior positions in Wiltshire National Farmers Union and remains a member of the local NFU branch.

Catherine Fookes

(Development Officer, Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

Catherine is Development Officer at the Wye Valley AONB where she is developing new projects, such as the local food strategy. Previously Catherine worked at Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming where she was responsible for persuading the Government to put in place an Organic Action Plan for England. Catherine is a member of the Government's Organic Action Plan committee and the Welsh Organic Strategy Group. Catherine also worked on food and farming issues at the Soil Association as Campaigns Manager, and as a campaigner at ActionAid, the international development agency. She has written several reports and papers, including the organic "Myth and Reality" report.

Kay Knight

(Head of Catering and Support Services, South Gloucestershire County Council)

Kay is the Head of Catering and Support Services at South Gloucestershire Council and has managed the Authority's catering services for the last five years. Her career has encompassed management and procurement of services over a number of years, previously working in commercial, NHS, Social Services and Education environments. Under Kay's leadership, South Gloucestershire's school meals service has developed from a failing service to a profitable operation and she leads the service with enthusiasm and vision. The service has embraced the principles of local purchasing over the last two/three years and has found it to be a recipe for success.

Jeanette Orrey

(Catering Manager, St Peter's Primary School, Nottinghamshire)

Jeanette is Catering Manager at East Bridgford St Peter's Primary School. She has been at the school for the past 12 years and for the last 4 years she has run the school meals' service using as much local and organic food as possible. Jeanette is also Director of Primary Choice, a company which helps schools provide children with healthy, locally sourced school meals.

James Petts

(Policy Officer, Sustain)

James is co-author of 'Good Food on the Public Plate: a manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering' published in July 2003. James is an economist by training and has previously worked in the farming and food industry. He has now been with Sustain for over four years working on a variety of projects. He has published several reports on food, farming and environment policy as well as contributing to various books on agriculture, health, and sustainability.

Robert Rees

(Chef and Consultant)

Robert is Chef and Director of his own company The Country Elephant Ltd. He is also resident chef for Gloucestershire Farmers Markets and BBC Radio Gloucestershire, a consultant for Gloucestershire Food Links, assists Gloucestershire Taste of the West on many aspects of local food and chairs the Gloucestershire "in house" school caterers group. At a national level, Robert is a Board Member of the Food Standards Agency and a member of the Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee supervising all aspects of UK meat safety policy monitored by the Meat Hygiene Service. In August of 2002 Robert took up a position as General Governor of the British Nutrition Foundation and recently became a member of the working party on Governance and Funding for the new Sector Skills Council.

Annex 2: Verbatim workshop record

Local authorities and support agencies

Who are the key stakeholders and what is happening in the three counties? (Local authorities and support agencies)

- Schools - Whole approach - local produce
- Collective Food Coop Wales
- Regional Strategy (food/farming)
- Awareness through media - organic farmers markets
- Media downside & beef
- CAP reforms
- School dinners - Ind. outside caterer
- Long contracts
- Some in/out
- No outside income!

Obstacles and Opportunities (Local authorities and support agencies)

Obstacles

- Cost
- Concept of expense
- Fragmentation of providers
- Timing cycle
- Variety
- That producers can meet continual demand
- Motivation - individuals and teams
- Isolation of purchasers
- Differing priorities of schools
- Having someone with the vision to make it happen
- Politics - no votes in it
- Changing cooking practices
- Seasonality
- Foods can be unappealing to children
- Peer pressure
- Logistical nightmare
- Bureaucracy
- Children's tastes
- Traceability

Opportunities

- Traceability
- Children's tastes
- Health benefits
- Better behaviour
- Social interaction
- Support
- Market potential
- For collectives of small producers
- Involvement of local families
- Public awareness about healthy eating
- Good publicity
- Top down pressure from Assembly
- National Curriculum
- Increasing awareness of food miles /environmental issues

Action Planning (Local authorities and support agencies - group 1)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Directory of suppliers	Develop database, website, communication between suppliers and customers	Regional Development Agencies	2004
Directory of budget holders and customers	As above		
Shared processing /marketing/ R&D facilities	Regional/county	Local supplier groups	
Infrastructure & equipment in school kitchens & skills	Adequate investment, small pilot scheme	Local fora	
Education	Develop customer base	All, healthy schools officers, parents, NOF	

Action Planning (Local authorities and support agencies - group 2)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Clarity of aims	Joined up thinking/communication/consultation	Funding organisation, local politicians	Now - with a minimum 10 year timescale
Specify Objectives	Knowledge empowerment	Producers	
Commitment to objectives	Political - engagement with the process	The school community, children	
Identify stakeholders	Development of a vision/engagement with stakeholders	External facilitators	
Ongoing academic research	Take a risk	Primary Care Trusts	
	Access funding	Local Authorities	

Suppliers and producers

Who are the key stakeholders and what is happening in the three counties? (Suppliers and producers)

- WM Regional Trade Show - HEFF/one stop shop
- Procurement GP (G) - LA, Sodexo
- Food Vision (G) - Local Strategic Partnership managed, x-cutting, PCT, health prom, key theme for LSP, funded by South West food and drink
- 'Food Links' - producers coming together
- Producer co-ops
- Drinking water in schools
- Healthy schools scheme
- Whole school approach
- 'Eat local food' (M) free press
- National School Fruit Scheme
- Fruit tuck shops

Obstacles and Opportunities (Suppliers and producers)

Obstacles

- Implementation of legislation
- Media scaremongering
- Lack of coordinated marketing by producers
- Supply chains
- Lack of collaboration
- Less advertising effects
- Producer confidence
- Existing contracts
- Red tape
- Politics
- Logistics
- The will
- Profit
- Cost
- Supply/supply volumes
- Continuity of supply
- Commercial interests
- Lack of availability
- Lack of range

Opportunities

- Sustainability issues - local purchasing
- Known provenance
- Increased awareness of food/health issues
- New food culture
- Better schools meals - PR and image
- Farmers agree to cooperate
- Authorities ready to listen
- More suppliers willing to supply direct
- Healthy eating
- Bringing prosperity to local industry
- Change of school ethos/culture
- Demand
- Seasonality

Action planning (Suppliers and producers - group 1)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Regional Food Groups - contacting and leading 'Taste West', Heart of England Fine Foods'	Communication and cooperation amongst producers	Regional Food Groups	ASAP
Sell products in processed form - adds value and maintains contract	Hire in services or set systems up so that product can go out as required. Links producer to end user	Producers	Where
Supplier - increase volume of sales to non-supermarket organisations, schools	As above		there's
Parental support	Parental involvement	Parents	a
Coordination amongst producers and authorities with raw materials and contracts	Straight forward - contracts, honesty, frankness & allowances	Parties involved	will
Trust amongst producers			there's a
Networking	Producers together know what they are doing, speak to the whole food chain	Contract organisations, all parties concerned	way!

Action planning (Suppliers and producers - group 2)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Producers need to initiate - network must be 'pro-active'	Directory, PR, trade shows, farmers' markets, newsletter	Health Auth. awareness, LACA, LA catering association	Now/ASAP
Coordinated approach			
Kitchens back into primary schools	Local authority, pressure from heads, governors, parents	LA	
Parent 'power'	Lobby heads, LA, MPs, media		
Communication between LA & producers/suppliers	'Food Links' website. clearly documented and part contract		2 months time
Producer/consumer food chain connected completely	'Umbrella' organisation. Producer/procurement officer talking.		

Schools

Who are the key stakeholders?

- Health authority
- Jarvis
- Sodexo
- Gwent DSO
- Gloucestershire Food Links
- Herefordshire Food Links
- Bulmer Foundation
- Regional Development Agency (x3)
- Monmouthshire Procurement Officer

What is happening in the three counties

- Four comprehensives - out sourced
- DSO - primary, next year out source - opportunity to dictate requirements
- Organic farm shop - new educational resource (Glos)
- Community 'Barn' bringing local producers together (Forest of Dean)
- Organic box scheme
- Wilts model - possible cross-fertilization
- Inter Reg project - organic procurement

Obstacles and Opportunities

Obstacles

- Cost - manpower, product, logistics
- Facilities - old
- Lack of skills
- Information/communication - engagement, transparency, culture change
- Red tape - unhelpful, bureaucracy
- Finding suppliers - info, producers (too small/big)
- Logistics - distribution
- Lack of power at local level
- Commitment
- Culture
- Cost
- EC Competitive Tendering process
- Availability
- Distribution systems

Opportunities

- Training - staff awareness/skills
- Menu development - nutritional analysis
- Reconnect food and farming - farm visit, processor visit, and whole school approach
- Talk more (like Italy) - pupils' council, partnerships, networking, and communication, support LEAs, invite criticism.
- Product development - dev products directly with schools
- Producer - producer groups, network empty vans
- Contracts (specifications) - help producers tender, make more flexible.
- Fashionable subject
- Funding
- Awareness
- Local emphasis
- Case studies

Action Planning (Schools 1)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Steering committee - consult widely with all interested parties, local food to local schools	Stakeholders - agree objectives		
Assess feasibility - demand, supply, cost			
Pilot			
Engage children/school communities (make it easy for parents to get involved)	Establish want change		
Food culture	Demo farms - establish network		
Communication support for staff, LEAs/school/ communities			

Action Planning (Schools 2)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Break down the barriers at all levels, children to government (social education - school to community)	Communication - Honest and open. Regular discussions. Feedback through all levels	Working group/party. Representation from varied levels	Jan 2004
Change in culture. Socially and educationally	Set up demonstrations at farm-producer-schools. More literature from associated bodies, producers, etc. Agree a vision	Producers, associated bodies, staff organisations	Jan 2005

Action Planning (Schools 3)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Education of all stakeholders including children, governing body, teachers, parents, providers etc	Through 'Forum' relevant to scale. Appoint steering group		
Audit of existing facilities/provision at LEA geographical area	Appoint auditor, evaluate audit		
Establish a strategy and develop a policy plan	Develop policy as driver		
Creating of 'forum'	Partner commitment, consult, sell, implementation team	Grassroots - initiative from school/producer - shared ownership	
Audit of producers, creation of local capacity	Including training		
Organisational structure/management.	Change facilities if required - invest		
Identify drivers - key individuals			
Monitoring and evaluation			
Alter food technology curriculum			

Action Planning (Schools 4)

What needs to be done?	How to do it?	Who to do it?	When?
Change legislation at top.	Lobby MPs	Parents, organisations, pressure groups	2006
Nutritionally balanced, tasty meals	Parental lobbying, voluntary help for food education	Parents, teachers, governors, head	PDQ
Training for existing staff	Public money	National govt.	Now!
Increase financial backing for school meals	Initial financial backing (self-financing long-term)	National govt.	2004
Remove profit motive	In-house catering	Schools	Contract renewal time
Reliable local food suppliers	Build local supply chains	Chefs	Now!

Annex 3: Delegates List

Marcus Adamson	Heart of England Fine Foods	marcus.adamson@heff.co.uk	01746 785185
Marieke Albus	Office of the Bishop of Hereford	m.albus@hereford.anglican.org.uk	01432 271355
Colin Andrews	The Dairy House	broadwardfarm@hotmail.com	01568 612777
Neal Arbery	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	david.n.griffiths@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk	01443 425343
Sue Bartlett	Wye Valley AONB		01600 710841
Ian Bebb	Free Press	monmouthfreepress@newsroom.co.uk	01600 713631
Andrew Blake	Wye Valley AONB	office@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk	01600 710842
Carol Bluett	Lakers School	plod1951@hotmail.com	01594 832263
Simon Brenman	Organic Networks	sbrenman@organicnetworks.org	0117 9254929
Nicola Bridges	BBC Radio Wales	nicola.bridges@bbc.co.uk	02920 323675
Joyce Brocklebank	Cumbria Organics	joycebram@aol.com	01229 716439
Chris Brooks	Worcestershire Partnership	Chris.brooks@wychavon.gov.uk	01386 565343
Nigel Buxton	Ensors Abattoirs Ltd	ensorsabattoir@compuserve.com	01594 823148
Nigel Buxton Guest	Ensors Abattoirs Ltd	ensorsabattoir@compuserve.com	01594 823148
Christopher Challener	Food consultant	christopher.challener@virgin.net	01591 610770
Sharon Chilcott	Wye Valley AONB	information@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk	01600 710846
Alison Childs	Forest of Dean Farmers' Markets	alisonchilds@ukonline.co.uk	01989 564594
Jean Clift	Teme Valley Market	admin@the-talbot.co.uk	01886 821235
Wiz Clift	Whitbourne Farmers Co-op	admin@the-talbot.co.uk	01886 821235
Peter Cook	South Gloucestershire County Council	peter_cook@southglos.gov.uk	01454 868686
Emma Costely-White	Paternoster School	mike@mcw-associates.com	01285 831750
Angela Cott	Severn Vyrnwy Project	angela.cott@countryside.gov.uk	01691 679683
Stacey Cronin	Riverside Nursery School		01291625783
Caroline Daniels	Shirenewton Primary School	shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01291 641774
Jillian Davies	Powys Food Links	jilliland@powys.gov.uk	01982 551857
Paul Davies	Redbridge Food Services	jamie.wright@redbridge-wholesale.co.uk	01432 273094
Nicholas Davis	Uskvale Poultry		01495 762295
Alan Davis	The Authentic Bread Co	emily@authenticbread.co.uk	01531 828181
Emily Davis	The Authentic Bread Co	emily@authenticbread.co.uk	01531 828181
Jackie Denman	John Masefield High School	ttcled@aol.com	01531 635451
Sarah Dickins	BBC	sarah.d@btclick.com	01873 821765
Anne Dowdeswell	Herefordshire Partnership	adowdeswell@herefordshire.gov.uk	01432 261789
Peter Draper	Cardiff County Council	pdraper@cardiff.gov.uk	029 20873231
Roger Drury	Forest of Dean Radio	contactus@fodradio.org	
Cathy Edge	Wyesham Infants School	cathy@19kymin.fsnet.co.uk	01600 713691
Lucy Edwards	Shirenewton School	rupert.edwards@virgin.net	01291 641284
Lesley Elliott	Newport City Council		01633 233440
David Evans	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council		01443 424358
Les Fearn	Wiltshire Regional Producers Network	les@regionalproducers.com	08902418283
Jonathan Felton	Countryside Agency	jonathan.felton@countryside.gov.uk	01952 247161
Catherine Fookes	Wye Valley AONB	development@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk	01600 710841
Robin Gable	Cross Ash Primary	mortongable@compuserve.com	01981 241164
Kardien Gerbrands	Gloucestershire Food Links	info@madeinstroud.org	01453 758060
Michael German AM	National Assembly for Wales	mike.german@wales.gov.uk	029 20898741
Susan Glendinning	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council		01443 424358
Liz Godden	Ragmans Lane Farm	info@ragmans.co.uk	01594 860244
Catherine Goodridge		catherine.goodridge@rrt-pct.nhs.uk	0121 5001460
Sandi Gosden	Welsh Development Agency	sandigosden@lineone.net	01495 785356
Sandra Greenslade	Adventa	SandraGreenslade@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01873 736035
Carina Greenwood	Woolaston School		01594 529270
Mike Hamilton	Flights Orchard Organics	mike@flightsorchard.co.uk	01531 632244
Marion Hancock	Cotswold Chine School	mail@cotswold-chine.org.uk	01453 837552
Stephen Hetenyi	Gloucestershire Council	shetenyi@gloscc.gov.uk	01452 425366
Roger Hoggins	Monmouthshire County Council	rogerhoggins@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01633 644134
Michael Holmes	National Farmers Union	michael.holmes@farmline.com	07767665257

Donna James	Health Promotion	sarah.morgan@nphs.wales.nhs.uk	01633 238170
Gaynor Jones	Ceredigion Producers Support	gjones@anturteifi.org.uk	01970 828194
Jenny Jones	Caerphilly Health Promotion	jenny.jones@nphs.wales.nhs.uk	01443 811430
Terry Jones	National Farmers Union	terry.jones@nfu.org.uk	020 7331 7638
David Kaye	Wiltshire Regional Producers Network		
George Keighley	Worcestershire County Council	gkeighley2@worcestershire.gov.uk	01905 766397
Steve Kelly	Newport City Council	steve.kelly@newport.gov.uk	01633 233440
Debbie Kendall Williams	Shirenewton Primary School	shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01291 641774
Janet Kent	Cotswold Chine School	mail@cotswold-chine.org.uk	01453 837552
James Kirwan	Countryside & Community Research Unit	jkirwan@glos.ac.uk	01242 531040
Kay Knight	South Gloucester Council	kay.knight@southglos.gov.uk	01454 863246
Karen Leach	Localise West Midlands	info@localisewestmidlands.org.uk	0121 685 1155
Richard Leake	Central Supplies Organisation	Richard.Leake@centralsupplies.org.uk	01495 762431 x37
Heather Lister	Herefordshire Jarvis Services Ltd	hlist@herefordshire.gov.uk	01432 383449
Catrin Maby	Severn Wye Energy Agency		
John Major	Councillor, Magor		01633 880432
Jane McIntosh	Llandogo School		01600 860618
Cathy Meredith	Holme Lacy College	cathy-meredith@pershore.ac.uk	01432 870566
Nick Miller	Miller - Research	miller-research@btconnect.com	01873 821765
Karren Moore	Riverside Nursery School		01291625783
Sarah Morgan	Healthy Schools Scheme	sarah.morgan@nphs.wales.nhs.uk	01633 238170
Andy Neale	Bulmers Foundation	an2@bulmers.com	
Sandra Nichols	National Farmers Union	sandra.nichols@nfu.org.uk	01392 440717
Emma Noble	Soil Association / Local Food Works	enoble@localfoodworks.org	0117 914 2423
Martin Orbach	Abergavenny Food Festival	info@abergavennyfoodfestival.co.uk	01873 851 643
Jeanette Orrey	Primary Choice Ltd	jeanette08@aol.com	01949 21182
Karen Ostler	Shirenewton School	shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01291 641774
Christopher Owen	Herefordshire Jarvis Services Ltd	cowen@herefordshire.gov.uk	01432 383449
Diana Palmer	Herefordshire Food Links	dianapalmer@btinternet.com	01873 890675
James Petts	Sustain: Alliance for better food and farming	james@sustainweb.org	020 7837 1141
Glenys Phelpstead	Newport Local Health Board	glenys.phelpstead@newportlhb.wales.nhs.uk	01633 436216
Janet Pontefract	Warwickshire County Caterers	janetpontefract@warwickshire.gov.uk	01926 412804
Granville Powell	Monmouthshire County Council	granvillepowell@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01633 644505
Linda Prosser	Newport City Council	linda.prosser@newport.gov.uk	01633 233440
Penny Quaile	City and County of Swansea	penny.quaile@swansea.gov.uk	01792 635600
Robert Rees	Chair	RobertRees@btopenworld.com	1452770872
Bleddyn Richards	Monmouthshire County Council	bleddynrichards@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01633 644843
Allen Shaw	Cardiff County Council	alshaw@cardiff.gov.uk	029 20788245
Steve Shearman	South Wales Farmers Markets	sshearman@farmersmarketsinwales.co.uk	01600 869037
Sarah Starkey	Heart of England Fine Foods	sarah.starkey@heff.co.uk	01584 781121
Melanie Steele	W O Steele & Son	wosteele@aol.com	01386 710741
Claire Taylor	Welsh Development Agency	claire.taylor@wda.co.uk	02920 828946
Mark Tebboth	Cardiff County Council	pdraper@cardiff.gov.uk	029 20873103
Dafydd Thomas	Newport City Council	dafydd.thomas@newport.gov.uk	01633 232165
Jackie Tudor	Monmouth County Council	jackietudor@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01633 644150
Dean Waller	Somerset County Council	dwaller@somerset.gov.uk	01823 356780
Brent Watkins	Wigmores of Monmouth		01600 712083
Fran Webb	Food Marketing Services	fran.webbfms@btopenworld.com	01384 870889
Michele Wehden	Monmouthshire County Council	michelewehden@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01873 735418
Mary Williams	Newport City Council	mary.williams@newport.gov.uk	01633 233440
Paul Williams	Property Contract Services	williams@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01633 644138
Rachel Williams	Shirenewton School	shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk	01291 641774

Annex 4: Summary of delegate's postcard commitments

At the end of the conference delegates were asked to fill in a postcard with their name and address and three commitments they would make to getting more local food into schools as an outcome of the conference. Below is a short sample of some of the commitments. The individual postcards will be sent back to delegates with their report on the conference.

Producers

- Contact made which will enable tendering for a procurement contract
- Try to initiate monthly local food tasting in local schools
- Investigate grant opportunities for a farmers group to set up supply structure for schools, hospitals etc
- Create doorstep retail sales for home shopping e.g. milk, juice, fruit, veg

Schools / Parents

- Collaborate with other parents to lobby for change
- Educate children on dietary requirements
- Talk to governors re sourcing more food locally
- Talk to Parent Teachers Association re local food
- Establish healthy eating committee at school
- Talk to children
- Approach other schools to get pilot scheme going

Support Groups (E.g. Food Links)

- Research how much food is needed for school meals
- Get realistic data re food production in Gloucestershire
- Get Hereford delegates together post-conference to discuss AWM pilot

Local Authorities

- Devise and implement local food strategy for Cardiff
- Reconsider contract terms and conditions to give opportunities to Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs)
- Discuss with catering managers possible menu changes
- Move towards a whole school approach
- Support schools who wish to set up their own catering

Annex 5: Conference Partners

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The Wye Valley AONB is a national designation with the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. In pursuing this, the AONB unit, supported by the Joint Advisory Committee, takes account of the need to safeguard rural industries and local socio-economic factors. It encourages people's quiet enjoyment and understanding of this unique national asset. The AONB unit is working on local food initiatives to support the economy of the region, and to help farmers in the AONB find local markets for their produce.

Contact: Catherine Fookes development@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk / Tel 01600 710841

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. It represents over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. Sustain runs the 'Sustainable Food Chains' project which includes work on public procurement and catering.

Contact: James Petts james@sustainweb.org / Tel: 020 7837 1228

Herefordshire Food Links

Herefordshire Food Links advises the county's small farmers and producers, distributes information from other organisations and provide skills training. It also promotes the benefits of shopping locally for local produce and works in partnership with other organisations that have related aims.

Contact: Diana Palmer dianapalmer@btinternet.com / Tel: 01873 890675

adventa

adventa is Monmouthshire's Leader+ Programme - a European Community Initiative aimed at encouraging and supporting high quality rural development with a strong emphasis on cooperation and networking. The main aim of adventa is to develop business opportunities with rural Monmouthshire, focusing on three core sectors: Food, Tourism and Timber.

Contact: Sandra Greenslade: sandragreenslade@monmouthshire.gov.uk / Tel: 01873 736035

Gloucestershire Food Links

The key aims of Gloucestershire Food Links are:

- To reconnect customers with the delights and benefits of local food
- To improve the availability of local food by working with farmers, food producers, farmers markets and retailers
- To encourage access to healthy, fresh, tasty, local food through special projects in schools and the community
- To make local food available in school dinners, hospital meals and at the work place

Over the past two years, through a number of pilot projects, Gloucestershire Food links has provided business advice, training and seminars for farmers and other producers to help them develop their food businesses.

Contact: Kardien Gerbrands info@foodlinks.info / Tel 01453 758060



Better School Dinners:

a conference on procuring local food in schools in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire

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Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
Tel: 020 7837 1228 Fax: 020 7837 1141
Web: www.sustainweb.org
Email: sustain@sustainweb.org

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Hadnock Road
Monmouth
NP25 3NG
Tel: 01600 710841
Fax: 01600 772051
Email: development@wyevalleyaonb.co.uk