



**CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON**



**Food Research
Collaboration**

2014 CITY FOOD SYMPOSIUM BRIEFING

Centre for Food Policy, City University, London www.city.ac.uk

On 15th December 2014, the Centre for Food Policy at City University London in conjunction with the **Food Research Collaboration** and the **Worshipful Company of Cooks** organised a symposium to debate **Sustainable Diets: what is a C 21st good diet and what needs to happen?**

The chair of the day, Prof Tim Lang, opened the event and set out the themes. The purpose of the day was to address the challenge of sustainable diets in the UK and to consider different approaches taken by key sectors and actors at UK, EU, global and local levels. The symposium was attended by 240 people, two thirds of whom came from academia and civil society organisations, the rest from government, media and the food industry. They heard presentations from 18 distinguished speakers.

The term 'sustainable diet' was coined several decades ago to mean a diet good for health and the environment. As interest in the topic has grown in the last decade or so, for some researchers, this broad meaning has been narrowed just to the environment, downplaying health and other social features. For others this is a technical issue, requiring 'choice-editing' by food supply chains. The need to alter the impact of current Western diets is clear. The Symposium heard strong summaries of the importance of tackling high impact dietary culture. In an era of climate change, biodiversity loss, water stress, and squeezed land use, the need to clarify what a sustainable diet is has thus become ever more important.

Consumers, not just supply chains and policy makers, need to be engaged with the issue but, as was discussed during the day, while there is general agreement that the problems must be addressed there is not a worldwide let alone continental or national consensus on the solutions. There are competing analyses of the way forward: there's not enough food and more needs to be produced versus there is enough food and it is maldistributed. We know what a sustainable diet is and need to focus on behaviour and policy change versus there are still unanswered questions about how to measure impacts and how change on some factors has 'knock-on' implications for others. The issue will be resolved by finance and costs versus this is a social problem requiring cultural action.

The Symposium was an opportunity to consider the UK's policy position on sustainable diets. It rose up the national agenda after the commodity crisis of 2007-08 with commitments made in Defra's Food 2030 and principles agreed by the subsequent Green Food Project (2012) but there was agreement that progress by the UK government has been

disappointing. It is not providing a lead on the transition to sustainable diets. One feature of the Symposium was to learn from other countries. Leading speakers from Germany, Brazil and the Netherlands all presented what their governments were going to help consumers change.

The food industry, too, is acutely aware of the case for change. Speakers from WRAP, IGD, the Sustainable Restaurant Association and the Food for Life Catering Mark, all presented signs that different sectors are seriously engaged with waste, carbon and water reduction as well as being aware of the need to reduce food's immense impact on biodiversity and health. This will redefine what is meant by market economics, one speaker suggested.

One level of some positive action within the UK was at the city-regional level. Speakers from London, Oxford and Fife gave examples of the new Sustainable Food Cities network, and of what individual and community led actions can do to nurture dietary change. They too, agreed the need for co-ordination by government to set a framework for change.

In the world of policy, people often say that the ideal is evidence-based policy. Of course. But bitter experience suggests that often policy lags behind evidence and evidence isn't tailored to what policy-makers want or need. In the case of sustainable diets, we have ample evidence of the need for food culture to change, and to do so rapidly. The only questions are: how? when? and will this transition be forced on us or be managed in advance of crises?

THE TALKS

All presentations were filmed; videos and PowerPoints will be made available at <http://www.city.ac.uk/arts-social-sciences/sociology/research/centre-for-food-policy/city-food-symposia>. What follows is a summary of each presentation.

Session 1: Mapping a sustainable diet: the case, the lessons so far

Food and the Future: Climate and Resilience

Prof Tim Benton, UK Champion for Global Food Security & Professor of Population Ecology, University of Leeds

The current trajectory of food demand puts us into difficult territory and is essentially unsustainable. Against a backdrop of climate change and increasing competition for natural resources, providing the projected demand for food will create a host of risks. By 2050, if the "business as usual trajectory" continues, agriculture would require substantially more land, more than double the current water requirements and led to carbon emissions on their own that would account for ~2 degrees of global warming. As farming demands more land and water to grow more, it would place significant pressures on the underpinning natural capital that supports it and potentially undermine the overall resilience of production. As a significant amount of food is wasted, and NCDs associated with over-consumption grow (and become more costly) changing our demand for food, to relieve

pressure on the agri-food system and environment, looks like an important point for intervention.

Sustainable diets and stakeholder perspectives: the case of livestock, meat and dairy.

Dr Tara Garnett, Food Climate Research Network

The food system today is inequitable, environmentally unsustainable and fails to feed people effectively. If we are to address our environmental problems and create a more food-secure, fairer and nutritionally adequate food future then the current food system needs to change.

While this much is agreed, there is much less unity on the sort of changes that are needed and ultimately on what a 'good' –sustainable food system – actually looks like. This presentation looked at who the stakeholders are in the food debate and examined their different approaches to the challenge of food system sustainability, focusing particularly on the meat & dairy question. It considered the knowledge and perspectives that these stakeholders bring to the problems and to the possible solutions, and the values that underpin these. Four normative scenarios were presented, based on a simplified representation of their positions. These were used to explore what their respective worlds would look like were these different visions to be realised and followed through to their logical conclusions; and the potential implications for greenhouse gases and land use, food security and human nutrition, animal welfare, economic development, and notions of personal responsibility and freedom.

My presentation concluded with a plea for greater exploration of the values that people bring to these debates. Shared discussions need to identify where common ground can be found and how we might move forward in areas where we disagree.

Mapping a sustainable diet: what might a healthy sustainable diet look like?

Dr Jennie Macdiarmid, Rowett Institute of Nutrition & Health, University of Aberdeen

A healthy sustainable diet is one that meets dietary recommendations for health, has a low environmental impact, and is affordable and culturally acceptable. The WWF Livewell 2020 project (http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/livewell_report_jan11.pdf) demonstrated that it is possible to create healthy diets with a low environmental impact (e.g. lower in greenhouse gas emissions), which are affordable¹. It should, however, be noted that it is also possible to have diets that are unhealthy with a low environmental impacts diets or healthy with a high environmental impact². Within the debate on sustainable diets greater consideration needs to be given to the cultural, social & personal values that we place on food and use in making food choices. History shows that changing dietary habits is not easy, but it is made even harder if social and personal values around food are not considered. To move from 'ideal' to 'realistic' sustainable diets this values needs to be incorporated, especially in developing new guidelines for sustainable diets.

1. *Macdiarmid et al. (2012) Sustainable diets for the future: can we contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by eating a healthy diet? AJCN 96, 3, 632-639*
2. *Macdiarmid JI (2013) Is a healthy diet an environmentally sustainable diet? Pro Nutr Soc 72, 1, 13–20.*

Are low-GHG diets healthy diets?

Dr Peter Scarborough, University of Oxford

Many dietary scenarios have been suggested that are aimed at reducing GHG emissions, almost all of which involve reducing meat consumption and increasing consumption of cereals, fruit and vegetables. The health impact of such changes in diet is likely to be positive. Recent systematic reviews of observational studies have suggested that there is a dose-response relationship between red meat consumption and cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality. Individual prospective cohort studies with data collection at multiple time points have shown that decreases in meat consumption are associated with reduced risk of weight gain and diabetes (and vice versa). And nationally representative survey data shows that meat consumption is inversely correlated with fruit and vegetable consumption, which is health promoting. However, experimental evidence on the health impact of meat consumption is missing. Also, we have little evidence on how people would change their diet if compelled to reduce meat consumption (for example by price levers) compared to how people change their diet through choice to reduce meat consumption. With the current evidence available to us, it appears that low GHG diets are healthier diets, but more evidence is needed from experimental studies to reduce the risk of confounding.

Session 2: Addressing the problem at national State level

Sustainable diets in the Netherlands: What is happening?

Corné van Dooren, Sustainable Food Expert, Netherlands Nutrition Centre

The food culture of ‘moderation’ and ‘food as fuel for labour’ in the Low Lands of the Netherlands is formed by common language, climate, religion (see f.i. milk maid and potato eaters). The traditional diet (1900-1940) is almost healthy and sustainable, but since then the consumption of animal products and the agro food network has grown enormously. The critical Scientific Board on Governmental Policy (WRR) report “Towards a Food Policy” in 2014 states that an explicit food strategy is needed that includes ecological sustainability, health and resilience of the food network and that food production support by government can no longer be separated from health issues. In addition, “to anchor health and ecology in food policy firmer, it is important to organize more institutional opposition.” The policy paper Sustainable Food (2009) of the Minister of Agriculture was a first attempt at such a policy. The Health Council Guidelines for a healthy diet: the ecological perspective (2011) then advised to eat a less animal-based and more plant-based diet and the reduction of energy intake for those with an excessive body weight. This advice will be included in the new Dietary Guidelines of 2015. We have already seen ten ingredients of hope as a

beginning of more sustainable diets, such as a decrease in meat consumption, an increase in tap water consumption and sustainable certified fish. Dutch chefs stand up for Dutch Cuisine with 80/20 rules, which are close to the optimized Low Lands Diet. It's time for an explicit national and European food policy to achieve such sustainable diets.

Sustainable food consumption – How does German sustainability politics deal with the challenge?

Prof Lucia A Reisch, Council for Sustainable Development, Germany

My talk summarised the situation from Germany's perspective and addressed the following questions: What has happened in government's sustainability policy in general and what is the state-of-the-art regarding sustainable food consumption and production specifically? How did the German Sustainability Council work emerge and what are the main policy tools? How is it working, and are there more general learnings for other countries? Where is Germany's thinking going now? What is the engagement at the European level for the German approach?

Covering these questions, the talk looks specifically into: the formal high level governance of sustainable development (such as: Council of Sustainable Development, Green Cabinet; representation of the parliament; Council of Advisors for Consumer Issues); the specific goals in the German Sustainability Strategy related to sustainable food consumption; promising policy tools ranging from the "Sustainable Shopping Basket" to "behavioural regulation" and smart canteens and more.

The revision of the Brazilian Dietary Guidelines

Dr Patricia Jaime, General Coordinator of Food and Nutrition, Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Brazil

My video presents the Brazilian experience of revising the Dietary Guidelines developed by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the University of São Paulo with the support of the Pan American Health Organization in Brazil. For promoting a healthy diet, it is necessary to encourage, protect, and promote ways to eat well and to pay attention to the sustainable use of natural resources, the protection of the environment and the Brazilian culinary and gastronomic culture. The revision process included several steps that allowed its broad debate by various actors and sectors of society and guided the construction of the final version. The guide contains the following five chapters: 1) the specified five principles, 2) general recommendations about food choices, 3) guidance on how to combine foods in the form of meals, 4) circumstances which influence how foods are metabolised by the body and the pleasure afforded by eating, and 5) barriers to of healthy diets and how these can be surmounted. All the recommendations of the Guidelines are summarised in the section Ten Steps to Healthy Diets. The Dietary Guidelines is available on: http://189.28.128.100/dab/docs/portaldab/publicacoes/guia_alimentar_populacao_ingles.pdf

Session 3: Addressing the problem at City / Regional level

Sustainable diets: tackling London's food related emissions

Leah Davis, Principal Policy Officer, Greater London Authority & Rosie Boycott, Chair, London Food Board

Rosie Boycott and Leah Davis presented on London's food activities and a new measurement of the CO2 emissions associated with London's supply chains, including its food supply chains. When these additional emissions are included in London's carbon footprint, total emission levels can almost treble. Food is responsible for between 10% and 13% of these total emissions. London will be looking into the drivers for these increased CO2 emissions from supply chains, and what can be done to reduce them. We will also be working with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and with the City of Milan (host of EXPO 2015) on an Urban Food Policy Pact – a world food policy for cities – involving dozens of cities across the globe.

Food Printing Oxford - how to feed a city

Tom Curtis, 3Keel LLP, Good Food Oxford

The FoodPrinting Oxford report (2013) developed a methodology to quantify for the first time the environmental impacts and dependencies of food consumption in Oxford in terms of land, water and energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition it evaluated options for taking action at city level and identified groups of organisations and businesses able to act in different areas. A year later, a new organisation, Good Food Oxford, took shape to fill the gap in capacity to coordinate effective food sustainability activities in the city. We report on the approach that has been taken and how new cross-sector collaborations have started to build on the FoodPrinting report to take on the complex challenge of behaviour change.

The Fife Diet: A local food experiment

Mike Small, Project Director, Fife Diet

The Fife Diet started with the idea of 'eating food from where you live'. A local food experiment, it initially was a one year project to eat food only from the region of Fife, on the east coast of Scotland and examine the impact.

The Fife Diet is a bioregional, community-based response to climate change. It was launched in 2007 and since then has grown to become Europe's largest local food project with 6500 members involved in taking six actions to change their collective behaviour. These six changes are 1) to eat locally 2) to eat more organic 3) to waste less food 4) to compost more 5) to eat less (and different) meat 6) to grow some of your own food. These changes are then quantified and a carbon data report is sent to the Scottish Government.

The project has worked on three levels: cultural (producing objects and creating live events to transform people's understanding of their food heritage); economic (managing a local food network linking producers and consumers) and political (publishing a Food Manifesto outlining ten changes that should be made to transform our food system).

The project begins from the assumption that there is something fundamentally wrong with our food system, but also that there is something we can do about it, if we act collectively and with ambition and courage. The experience has been systematically documented online for the past eight years (see <http://fifediet.co.uk>) and a full carbon assessment is due out this March 2015, as well as a recipe book. The project's founder, Mike Small is the author of 'Scotland's Local Food Revolution' (2013).

Session 4: Addressing the problem through civil society **Europe signals climb down from Single Food Policy**

Tony Long, Director, Director, WWF European Policy Office

WWF's engagement with the food policy debate started several years ago when the numbers linking food production, processing and distribution systems with greenhouse gas emissions became better understood, and more alarming. At about the same time, the heightening of global competition for land for food, water, and energy drew us into a larger food policy agenda of how to reconcile population pressures, changing dietary expectations and resource shortages. In Europe, there was a reasonable expectation that the European Commission was itself getting interested in the subject. A public internet consultation was launched in 2013 on sustainable food consumption and a communication – “Building a Sustainable European Food System” – promised. It never saw the light of day falling victim to the principle of “subsidiarity”. Trying to revive a European-wide interest in food policy looks as distant as ever under the new administration led by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker which has promised to be more “ambitious and bigger on the big things”. Food policy, and even food waste, does not appear to be one of them. That leaves food policy activists with a choice – try to create a new European food agenda using new arguments, perhaps through innovative business coalitions, or switch focus and start looking for more opportunities for policy change at the national level.

Eating Better's work on sustainable diets

Sue Dibb, Co-ordinator of Eating Better: for a fair, green, healthy future

My presentation covered: why Eating Better came into existence, eating Better's activities and research and the challenges and opportunities it has experienced.

Eating Better is a broad and growing UK-based alliance of currently 43 national civil society organisations that have come together to raise awareness of the need to shift eating patterns towards healthy sustainable diets with a particular focus on encouraging 'less and better' meat eating.

Since its launch in July 2013, Eating Better has been working to influence government policies, engage businesses and develop behaviour change strategy to understand how best to encourage people in this dietary transition. Our report: Let's Talk About Meat, published in December 2014 and based on a literature review, includes new YouGov research on the public's attitudes and behaviours towards eating less meat. It identifies 10 ways to motivate behaviour change and makes recommendations for policy makers, researchers, businesses and civil society organisations.

Which?'s approach to sustainable diets

Sue Davies, Chief Policy Advisor, Which?

There are many dimensions to sustainability. Through its Future of Food debate in 2012 Which? aimed to understand how consumers understood the many challenges facing the food system and their views on the priorities going forward. This research, which is about to be repeated with a more detailed focus on the different options for future production and consumption, highlighted that many people were unaware of issues relating to food security and the environmental impact of foods. They wanted more information and expected action from the government and food industry to help them make more sustainable choices. While price has been dominating food choices, the research highlighted that other factors were also important – and became more so once people had a better understanding of the longer term issues facing the food system. Which? wants to see a much more joined up approach to dealing with these issues across Government. Policy has become too fragmented across government departments and there is no clear strategy or vision for the future of food production. The next Government needs to involve consumers in developing a national food strategy.

Session 5: Addressing the problem through business

Weighing up the public and food industry on sustainable diets

Jon Woolven, Managing Director, IGD

IGD is a charity that works via industry to help deliver a secure and sustainable future but not as an industry spokesman.

The public want to leave things in good shape for future generations and so are willing to contribute to more sustainable diets if: 1. need is explained, 2. the way to contribute is clear and 3. their sacrifice isn't too painful, as illustrated by progress to date on food waste, Fairtrade etc. But major shifts in diets have failed with our tests showing that only 21% of shoppers believed they can influence climate change through food choices.

An anonymous IGD convention poll that asked 600 industry leaders "what's your company's current view on sustainability?" found 48% with a "steady commitment" and 38% "paying more attention each year, with only 9% and 5% stating it was "never a priority" and "on the back burner" respectively. Although "waste and resource efficiency" were identified as industry's main immediate priority, they did report to be thinking ahead on diet.

Overall it's important not to just criticise industry as endorsing good companies is a powerful way to influence them. Industry can and does contribute to sustainable diets by improving product sustainability, building knowledge, inspiring consumers by informing their choices and choice editing if backed by customers (as with fish). The key question is whether markets can be reframed so that they value externalities and protect the future for companies too.

Sustainability – do restaurants really matter?”

Mark Linehan, MD, Sustainable Restaurants Association

Sustainability is complex, and for restaurants and foodservice businesses it is particularly complex. They are not short of advice on specific issues from a broad range of NGOs, but few address those issues specifically for the sector. The Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) was launched in 2010 to interpret this complex landscape for the foodservice sector, provide a framework for understanding and benchmarking sustainability, support and advise member restaurants and develop a rating to help consumers make informed decisions when eating out. The SRA now has over 4000 member sites across the UK and globally.

The sector matters because we are eating more meals out of the home than ever before – 1 in every 8.5 – and because of its sheer size – valued at £80 billion annually to the UK economy. People are not only becoming more interested in sustainability issues, as they relate to food and eating out, but the things they care about are changing to include not only sourcing and food-related issues, but also wider social and environmental factors.

The foodservice sector faces many challenges in becoming more responsible – time, costs, very tight margins, changing customer priorities, new legislation and regulations – so where will the impetus come from to accelerate change? More legislation, voluntary agreements, NGO pressure, customers voting with their feet?

Food for Life Catering Mark: transforming catering at scale

Joanna Lewis, Assistant Director, Strategy, Soil Association

The Food for Life Catering Mark is an accreditation scheme for caterers, backed by annual site inspections and verifying national nutrition standards for each sector. The scheme's Bronze, Silver and Gold tiers reward continuous improvement and represent a ladder to excellence. Thanks to the commitment of thousands of chefs and caterers, the scheme now certifies over 1 million meals each day in over 25% of schools as well as early year's settings, universities, visitor attractions, restaurants, workplaces, hospitals and care settings, helping to create new social norms around healthy and sustainable diets. Defra's Balanced Scorecard for food and catering states that the *"Food for Life Catering Mark is a well-established scheme for caterers that covers similar issues to the balanced scorecard. Membership of the scheme provides caterers with independently verified evidence of their achievements. It incorporates a wide range of product assurance schemes including Red Tractor and other farm assurance schemes, Fairtrade, LEAF Marque, Marine Stewardship Council, Freedom Food and Organic, and will generally guarantee good or excellent performance by caterers against the award criteria in the balanced scorecard."* Over 450,000 meals a day now meet the Silver or Gold standards, which tackle the priority issue for sustainable diets by incentivising meat-free days as well as higher welfare meat. Prospects for further growth of the scheme are good thanks to recent strong endorsement from the Department for Education, Defra and the Department of Health.

GRAND LECTURE

The Future of Our Food. Where next?

Prof Olivier De Schutter, Centre for Philosophy of Law, University of Louvain, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food (2008-2014)

There is a growing consensus that our food systems are failing to deliver what we now expect from them. The productivist paradigm inherited from the 1950s and 1960s succeeded in delivering large volumes of cheap calories to the public, thus lowering the portion of the household that goes to buying food. But this has been at the cost of environmental degradation, ill-health linked to the shift to heavily processed foods, and rural development: the consumer may be paying less, but it is the taxpayer, and future generations, that ultimately shall foot the bill. How we may transition to more sustainable food systems, however, remains debated. Governments have an important role to play, through taxation and subsidies, through regulation, and by using their market power in public procurement. Market actors may also contribute to the shift, by more responsible sourcing policies and various labelling or multistakeholder initiatives. But transition can also be thought of as operating bottom-up, through civil society deciding to reinvent local food systems — influencing decisions of school boards and local administrations, encouraging community gardens or community-supported agriculture and other short chain initiatives. Reviewing these various initiatives illustrates how democracy in food systems is key to achieving changes, and to overcoming the various lock-ins that otherwise obstruct the food revolution we need.

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The City Food Symposium 2014

Sustainable Diets: what is a C 21st good diet and what needs to happen?

Event Date: Mon 15 Dec 2014

Venue: City University London (Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre) Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB, UK: www.city.ac.uk/visit

Objectives:

1. To summarise current thinking on how to address the challenge of sustainable diets
2. To consider the different approaches taken by key sectors and actors
3. To assess current policy at UK, EU, global and local levels
4. To clarify ways forward

Audience: academics, civil society, policy-makers, industry, Food Research Collaboration members

Format: Short presentations + discussion

PROGRAMME

Chair's Introduction: Prof Tim Lang, Centre for Food Policy, City University London

0930 Session 1: Mapping a sustainable diet: the case, the lessons so far

Prof Tim Benton, UK Champion for Global Food Security

Dr Tara Garnett, Food Climate Research Network

Dr Jennie Macdiarmid, University of Aberdeen

Dr Peter Scarborough, University of Oxford

Q&A / Discussion

1045 Session 2: Addressing the problem at national State level

Corné van Dooren, Sustainable Food Expert, Netherlands Nutrition Centre, NL

Prof Lucia A Reisch, Council for Sustainable Development, Germany

Dr Patricia Jaime, head of Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Brazil

Q&A / Discussion

1200 LUNCH

1300 Session 3: Addressing the problem at City / Regional level

Leah Davis & Rosie Boycott, Greater London Authority

Tom Curtis & Julian Cottee, 3Keel LLP, Good Food Oxford

Mike Small, Project Director, Fife Diet

Q&A / Discussion

1415 Session 4: Addressing the problem through civil society

Tony Long, Director, WWF European Policy Office

Sue Dibb, Co-ordinator, Eating Better

Sue Davies, Chief Policy Advisor, Which?

Q&A / Discussion

1530 TEA

1600 Session 5: Addressing the problem through business

Andrew Parry, Project Manager & Mark Barthel, Special Advisor & Head of Design, WRAP

Jon Woolven, Strategy & Innovation Director, IGD

Mark Linehan, MD, Sustainable Restaurants Association

Joanna Lewis, Assistant Director (Strategy), Food for Life & Soil Association

Q&A / Discussion

1715 GRAND LECTURE – Prof Olivier De Schutter – The Big Picture: where next?

Prof De Schutter. Professor of Law at the University of Louvain, Belgium. UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food 2008–14

1800-1930 Reception (Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre foyer)

Mince pies, wine and juices