

Response to Becoming a Good Food Nation: Scottish Government Discussion Document – Oct 2014

Consultation Response 2014

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's Discussion Document: Becoming a Good Food Nation. The Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913 and works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. We have chosen only to comment upon the topics for which we have relevant experience and evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

Local Food

A Good Food Nation requires affordable, accessible and nutritious locally grown food - from a sustainable, ethical and secure food chain. The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes the prioritisation of local food as one of the key strands in Becoming a Good Food Nation. This prioritisation should include significant focus on developing skills and livelihoods within smaller-scale food growing. Local food and local growing should be inextricably linked and specifically referenced in Scotland's vision for the future.

[Growing Livelihoods](#) is a new initiative which is creating, testing and promoting new opportunities in smaller-scale food growing for those new to the sector, young people or those seeking a new direction. This two-year development project (2014-15) is a partnership between the Carnegie UK Trust, the Plunkett Foundation and the Land Settlement Association Charitable Trust. With particular emphasis on skills development, infrastructure, routes to market and shortening food supply chains - we aim to help create skilled jobs and provide viable livelihoods in smaller-scale food growing through innovation and co-operation.

Recruitment

Initial scoping, conducted by the Plunkett Foundation and which led to the development of Growing Livelihoods, confirmed the significant challenges facing smaller-scale growers. A range of different stakeholders highlighted the pressing need to bring new people into horticulture, particularly young people and those without existing connections to the sector. Growing needs an image change: to offset the rapidly ageing workforce and lack of new entrants. To attract young people, the sector should promote skilled, self-determined and fulfilling careers. Hard-work but rewarding.

Infrastructure

Compounding the issue of recruitment, is a lack of access to training opportunities and limited horticultural-enterprise infrastructure for smaller-scale commercial food growers. Beyond growing for their own consumption, many more people will need to believe they can create a viable livelihood in order to pursue a future in smaller-scale growing. The lack of clear career pathways and limited co-ordination of support and resources for smaller-scale growers stifles this. Infrastructure, or a hub, is

required to specialise in supporting enterprise models. To provide business support and advice, horticulture training and mentoring, specific to the needs of smaller-scale food growers interested in developing a career.

Routes to market

Smaller-scale enterprises need to do things differently. A broad mix of enterprise, horticulture and interpersonal skills must be encompassed in a small number of people, a very different approach to larger enterprises where specialisms are more important. Small enterprises cannot compete on scale or wholesale pricing, they need to add value through higher skilled growing of higher value products, direct sales to consumers and community connections to share risks and rewards of production. The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 - intended to allow the flexibility to change practices – encourages using the power of public spend to deliver public value beyond simply cost. These changes present opportunities to enhance localism, create new markets for smaller-scale food growers and introduce more diversity into locally produced food through smaller-scale food growers and co-operatives.

Overview of a Good Food Nation

The Growing Livelihoods pilot projects are based across the UK and Ireland. The lessons learned from these pilots and other successful smaller-scale food growing enterprises around the country need to be shared widely. Innovative approaches to using small areas of land; incubator farms for new growers to test business ideas in low-risk settings; local food distribution models; apprenticeships and working co-operatively to improve access to market could help to transform the smaller-scale growing sector. More information about the approaches being explored through Growing Livelihoods can be found [here](#).

In summary, a Good Food Nation requires:

- local food production
- smaller-scale food growers
- skills and livelihoods
- supply chain adaptation
- access to land
- training and enterprise support

With thanks to the Plunkett Foundation [@PlunkettFoundat](#) scoping work for Growing Livelihoods and Keep Scotland Beautiful [@KSBScotland](#) Good Food Nation discussion event (02.09.14), for informing this response.

The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes discussions with other organisations interested in innovative solutions to support the development of skills and livelihoods within smaller-scale food production.

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