

# Food Link News

Newsletter of the Skye & Lochalsh Food Link Group

Autumn 2005

Skye and Lochalsh has had mixed fortunes with tourism this year. After a busy start, the season has had its ups and downs, never fulfilling the promise of the start of the season, however with much national and international attention centred on the quality of foods available in the Highlands and Islands and moves towards promoting the Highlands 'Year of Culture' in 2007, there may be benefit to the area's trade next season from which both food producers and customers can benefit

## LOCAL FOOD FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

'Skye and Lochalsh' produces some of the best food in the world. Much of this fine produce is used in hotels and restaurants or exported, but there is increasing demand for local produce for local people. The first difficulty is in getting enough produce to satisfy that additional demand. The second problem is in getting that produce to the customer. Food Link hopes to work with other organisations to resolve these problems. The Food Link Van can deliver 'vegetable boxes' to an address along the route, from which individuals can collect. If you are interested in this type of arrangement for regular orders see if you can get a few neighbours interested and then contact Food Link's Marketing Co-ordinator (see back page).

The SLHDA stall, village shops and Farmer's Markets are other methods by which local people can obtain local produce over the summer months. Gate sales are popular for eggs, but keep your eyes open for vegetables too.

## WE NEED YOU

More growers/producers are needed to help satisfy the demand for locally grown or produced foods. It's been a difficult season, not the best time to persuade more growers to join the small army already feeding the people of Skye and Lochalsh, however more producers and processors are needed if we are to satisfy the demand for local produce. Enthusiastic gardeners can contribute to this shortfall by selling on surplus produce via the Food Link Van or SLHDA stall.

## HILFN COURSE

The Highlands and Islands Local Food Network (HILFN) is hoping to run a one-year training programme to help expand small-scale horticulture production in the Highlands and Islands in 2006. The course will help new or developing producers gain access to locally based training practical skills from planning and propagation to harvesting and marketing, to enable them to grow and sell vegetables and soft fruit locally. It is proposed to cover organic production techniques where possible.

The plan is to run it as an Intern course with participants spending 3 or 4 days training together each month for one year; and between the training sessions gaining experience either on their own unit or working for a local producer. The course will be open to potential producers of any age who want to grow and sell to local markets. The training sessions will be based on local horticultural units and will where possible use the expertise of experienced local producers. In 2006 we are looking at piloting the course in two areas probably NW Highlands, based around Ullapool area; and Inner Moray Firth, based around Inverness/ Black Isle/ Nairnshire.

HILFN are working with Scottish Agricultural College and LANTRA to put together the structure of the course just now and we would like to hear from potential participants interested in joining the course, and from experienced producers who would be interested in sharing their experience.

Please contact Jo Hunt on 01381 600205 or email [jo@blaeberry.org](mailto:jo@blaeberry.org) if you would like to put your name down as a potential participant - either trainee or trainer

### Food Dates for Your Diary

October 2<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>  
Food, Diet & Health  
Conference at  
SECC, Glasgow

October 21<sup>st</sup> Apple Day  
[www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)

October 24<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>  
British Sausage Week

November 1<sup>st</sup> World  
Vegan Day  
[www.worldveganday.org](http://www.worldveganday.org)

November 3<sup>rd</sup>  
On Track.  
Scottish Community  
Diet Project  
Conference, Glasgow

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## WHAT'S NEW?

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Food Link has a relief Driver. Paul McGlynn has joined Food Link Group as relief driver. Whilst Alan Wilson remains the regular driver, having Paul available to take over means that Alan is now able to take a holiday while producers and customers can maintain the regular delivery schedule.

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## SLOW FOOD UK FOUNDING CONGRESS

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The formation of Slow Food UK took place in Sabhal Mor Ostaig at the end of August. Over 150 members of the British Slow Food Movement, representatives of Slow Food, farmers, producers, policy makers and food writers came together to share their ideas, experiences and vision for the future. This reflected the growth of the movement with a dedicated UK office due to open in 2006.

Slow Food is committed to preserving biodiversity and local culture and developing initiatives to support its small farmers, artisan producers and residents. In keeping with Slow Food's eco-gastronomic values, the event was a unique opportunity to showcase the very best traditional foods from the Highlands and Islands and beyond, including rare-breed Shetland beef and mutton, shellfish, heirloom vegetable varieties and artisan bread and cheese, at a lunch prepared by top Highland chefs.

Skye and Lochalsh Convivium Leader, Carole Inglis said, 'We were honoured that Skye was chosen to host the Congress, as it was up against some stiff competition from around the UK. Although Slow Food Skye & Lochalsh is the UK's youngest convivium, the area has a thriving local food culture with a range of initiatives that support small farmers, artisan producers and local consumers. Local convivium members, Shirley Spear and Michael Smith of The Three Chimneys brought together an outstanding 'Taste of Skye and Lochalsh' menu, including canapés served with pre-dinner drinks, sourced solely from twenty-six local producers. 'We were thrilled to be invited to host this dinner, celebrating the best of Skye seafood and local produce from the island and mainland Lochalsh. The whole ethos of Slow Food is embedded

in the culture of The Three Chimneys and we feel privileged to be preparing dinner on this historic occasion'.

Since its foundation in 1986 in the town of Bra in Italy, Slow Food has become an international movement, and its eco-gastronomic values and activities have won the support and involvement of people throughout the world as they have become increasingly concerned about the quality, diversity and sustainability of their food. In Britain there are now over 35 Slow Food convivia in rural and urban communities and over 2,000 members, who actively participate in local, national and international events and initiatives.

Slow Food has been working with government departments and like-minded organisations to secure increased recognition and support for Britain's small farmers and artisan producers; efforts that have won praise in the UK and abroad and from the Movement's founder, Carlo Petrini: "The launch of the Slow Food UK Association is an important achievement for our Movement. It is the result of the dedication and hard work of volunteers over many years to make the British aware and proud of their gastronomic patrimony".

For information email Carole Inglis  
[slowfood@lochviewhouse.co.uk](mailto:slowfood@lochviewhouse.co.uk)

*Convivium: feast*

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## SKYE MEAT

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### Armadale Meats

Bill Currie moved to Skye from Glasgow 27 years ago with his wife Carol and young family. They bought the local shop, Ardvasar Stores. Twelve years ago, Bill took over the lease of Armadale Farm, in Sleat and bought 6 Aberdeen Angus calves from neighbouring crofts. There are now 40 Aberdeen Angus cattle on the farm. The cattle graze on the hill all year round on grass and heather, unlike supermarket beef where cattle may spend their last 6 weeks indoors where they are fed barley. In autumn and winter, and when in calf, the cattle receive additional feed in the form of home produced silage and also sugar beet rations. When the cattle are ready for the butcher they are taken to Munro's in Dingwall where they are

butchered to Bill's instructions and vacuum packed.

Once returned to Skye the meat is labelled and put in the freezer. It doesn't stay there long. It's in popular demand, as people nowadays like to know where their beef is from and how it is reared. Local people see these cattle on the hill, and can trust the product they get.

It is now so popular that relatives of locals who come on holiday to see the family put in an order for beef to take home with them to the city.

To find out more contact Bill Currie on 01470 844214 or call in at Ardvasar Stores to find out what's in the freezer.

### Early Bird catches the customers

The summer Farmer's Market in Portree has had meat products for sale for the first time this year as part of the continuing development of Early Bird Enterprises local meat production. Their bacon and ham, venison and gourmet sausages have been very popular with the local market, showing the increasing demand for locally reared and processed top quality products - food with an identity. In keeping with this ethos, Early Bird Enterprises' bacon and sausages were featured in the welcome dinner for the Slow Food Convivium. Keith and Rachael are working hard to fill the increasing demand for their produce, and suggest over the winter months that customers phone and order produce in advance. In preparation for the Christmas market, Keith and Rachael have now got turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, chickens and geese happily ranging their holding, and advise that orders for these be placed early. Phone Rachael on 01470 521 828.

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## PLUGGING THE LEAKS

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Every time a £1 changes hands within a community it means income for a local person. The more times it changes hands, the better for that community.

The New Economics Foundation [www.nef.org](http://www.nef.org) has developed a model to measure the effect of various initiatives, such as local food schemes, on a community's local money flows.

As a practical illustration, the New Economics Foundation compared the economic impact effects on the community of shopping for fruit and

vegetables in a supermarket and from a local organic 'box scheme'. The results showed that every £10 spent with the box scheme was worth £25 for the local area, compared with just £14 when the same amount was spent in a supermarket.

SALE has commissioned local company MacLeod Research Ltd to use the New Economics Foundation 'Multiplier Model' to measure the effects of the 'Local Food Link' initiative, currently operating in Skye and Lochalsh, with a view to providing a clear and simple measurement of the economic impact of buying fresh produce locally.

The aim of the initiative is to show the benefit of buying local to the whole community at large and to show that every member of the community has it within their grasp to make a difference. Visit [www.pluggingtheleaks.org](http://www.pluggingtheleaks.org)

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## LOCAL PRODUCE

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*Local produce can be found at these outlets, (all subject to season and availability).*

West Highland Dairy (Achmore)

*Cheeses, crème fraiche, yogurt, ice cream.*

Ardvasar Stores (Ardvasar)

*Beef and lamb*

Sleat Trading (Armadale)

*Tablet, ales, whisky, water*

Clan Donald Centre (Armadale)

*Tablet/Venison*

Mace (Broadford)

*Ales, Whisky*

Woodrising Gallery (Broadford)

*Tablet, ice cream*

Isle of Skye Seafood (Broadford)

*Fresh & smoked fish & shellfish, herbs*

Skye Surprises (Broadford)

*Tablet, Ales, Whisky*

The Stop Shop (Carbost) *Ales*

Talisker Distillery (Carbost) *Whisky*

Dunvegan Shop (Dunvegan)

*Fish, tablet*

The Fruit & Nut Place (Dunvegan)

*Cheese, Crème Fraiche, yogurt, Herbs, Eggs, soft fruit.*

Glen Stores (Glendale) *Eggs, salads*

Glendale Village Shop (Glendale) *Salads*

Lochalsh Butchers (Kyle of Lochalsh)

*Local meat and fish/shellfish & herbs*

Early Bird Enterprises (Orbost)

*Sausages, bacon, ham, venison, 'Christmas' poultry.*

Jackson's Wholefoods (Portree)

*Cakes, bread, preserves, eggs, soft fruit*

Vanilla Skye (Portree)

*Chocolates, ice cream, tablet*

MacKinnon's (Portree)

*Soft fruit*

MacRae Jones Stores (near Balmacara)

*Seafood, herbs, meat*

Pieces of Ate (Staffin)

*Seafood, cheese, ales.*

Isle of Skye Brewery (Uig)

*Ales*

Rankin's Bakery & grocery store (Uig)

*Water*

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## GREAT TASTE

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The Great Taste of Skye and Lochalsh took place in Broadford on 24<sup>th</sup> July, in some of the best weather of the year. The Food Link Van attended to represent Skye and Lochalsh Food Link Producers and several producers attended in person to promote their range of products. Bridget Hagmann from Glendale Salads attended with an always-impressive array of salad leaves and edible flowers and Roger Whiddon from Isle of Skye Fresh Produce attended with a range of herbs. Identifying the herbs proved popular and challenging for those of us who're really only familiar with 'parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme'.

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## NEWS FROM SLHDA

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It's been an 'interesting year' for SLHDA producers, with severe weather continuing through the spring and summer months; this has meant very low yields for some fruit producers. As in previous years the SLHDA stall could have sold much more produce at its market in Portree, if there had been more produce available.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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Although Skye businesses reported an increase in early season bookings, trade throughout the summer has been very 'up and down' with many businesses reporting very quiet times. The uncertainties of the tourist season give growers and producers 'food for thought'. Local people require food all year and schools require produce throughout the year *except* at the height of the tourist season. Plenty of opportunities to look at spreading the supply of local produce across the local consumer and visitor markets!

The Food Link Group is interested to hear from any new producers/growers and established businesses that are to increase production or diversify.

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## FARMERS' MARKETS

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Somerled Square's facelift was completed in time for the first weekly SLHDA market of the year in June. A new development for the market is that other food producers are able to join the SLHDA in the square once a fortnight. Rachael and Keith Jackson from Early Bird Enterprises find this arrangement works well; they attend the market twice per month, taking their sausages to market once a fortnight, and ham, bacon & venison on alternate fortnights. A Christmas Food Market is planned; contact Ian Brown [ib@skyeberries.com](mailto:ib@skyeberries.com) for information.

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## FOOD FROM BRITAIN COMPETITION

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Food From Britain and the Daily Telegraph have launched a new competition - the 'Taste of Britain' 2005 and are looking for the best 50 food and drink products in the UK. Coverage to support competition begins 25<sup>th</sup> September in The Daily Telegraph's Weekend Food & Drink section. The Taste of Britain competition 2005 is free to enter; closing date for entries is 16th December. For details see [www.regional-food-and-drink.co.uk](http://www.regional-food-and-drink.co.uk) To enter the competition either fill in the on-line form at [www.telegraph.co.uk/tasteofbritain](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/tasteofbritain) or download a PDF of the entry form. Send the form to: Daily Telegraph Taste of Britain, PO Box 4445, Colchester CO2 8GD

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## END OF REIGN FOR KING SCALLOPS?

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EU changes to regulations that could badly affect King Scallop producers look likely to go ahead. New EU regulations will require producers to test each batch of scallops for ASP. The cost of these tests, at an estimated £200 per time, would potentially put the environmentally friendlier scallop divers out of business and leave the way open for large-scale scallop dredging. To support your local scallop divers contact your local MP, MSP or Tony Blair.

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*'Food in Skye & Lochalsh  
is of the finest quality to be  
found anywhere'*

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## PRODUCERS 2005

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### **Gillian Barrett**

Organic salads, fruit and vegetables.  
Soil Association Certification.  
Gillian Barrett. Tel: 01478 650311

### **Donald MacDonald**

Potatoes, cabbages, broccoli, kale etc.  
Donald McDonald. Tel: 01478 640276

### **Donallan Strawberries**

Strawberries, raspberries and jam.  
Tel/fax: 01470 532385.

### **Lusta Fungi.**

Organic Shiitake, Lion's Mane and  
Oyster mushrooms.  
Soil Association Certification  
Neal Christie and Brigid MacLachlan  
Tel: 01470 592209

### **Isle of Skye Fresh Produce Co.**

Herbs, oriental salads, and leaf crops.  
Roger & Fiona Whiddon  
Tel: 01470 521812.

### **Skye Vegetables.**

Attractive and unusual varieties of  
vegetables plus herbs and fruit.  
Anthony Hovey. Tel: 01470 511285

### **Skyeberries.**

Blueberries, raspberries, currants etc.  
Ian Brown. Tel: 01470 582462

### **Skye Fruit & Fungi**

Strawberries and Shiitake and Oyster  
mushrooms.  
Tel: Lisa Mehan 01471 855245  
Tel: Val Piddock 01471 855310.

### **Glendrynoch Garden**

Watercress grown in Skye spring water.  
Deirdre Peppe. Tel: 01478 640218

### **Glendale Salads**

Organic salad leaves, herbs and edible  
flowers. Soil Association Certification.  
Bridget Hagmann. Tel: 01470 511349

### **Loch Eishort Mussels**

Rope grown mussels from Loch  
Eishort. Available all year except May.  
Peter MacAskill. Tel: 01471 822309.

### **Isle of Skye Oysters**

Pacific Oysters reared in Loch Harport.  
Kenny Bain. Tel: 01478 640313

### **Oakes Marine**

Hand dived, wild ranched, King  
Scallops, in the shell.  
David Oakes. Tel: 01478 650304

### **Loch Bracadale Crabs**

Locally caught crabs, cooked and  
prepared. Crabmeat can be purchased  
as white meat only, or white & brown  
meat, in the shell or cartons. Crabmeat  
freezes well so you can keep some in.  
Rick Simons Tel: 01470 572264.

### **MacKenzie's Bakery**

Bread, cakes, scones, oatcakes etc.  
Neil and James MacKenzie  
Tel: 01478 612028.

### **Isle of Skye Seafood Company Ltd**

Fresh and smoked fish and shellfish  
year round according to availability and  
weather conditions.  
John Gilbertson. Tel: 01471 822135.

### **West Highland Dairy**

Soft and hard cheeses, ice cream,  
yogurt and crème fraiche. Kathy travels  
worldwide to teach people how to make  
cheeses.  
Kathy & David Biss  
Tel: 01599 577203.

### **Vanilla Skye**

Hand-made chocolates from Skye's  
only chocolate shop. Traditional and  
exotic new flavours.  
Pam, Lesley, Linda or Barbara  
Tel: 01478 611295

### **Isle of Skye Fudge Company**

Hand made tablet, in original flavour or  
Talisker. It's the perfect gift to take  
over the sea from Skye.  
Contact great-taste@skyefudge.co.uk.

An A4 list of producers is available,  
email lesley.linley@btinternet.com.  
and state if you would like to receive  
your list by email or conventional post.

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## HOW TO USE THE FOOD LINK VAN

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Customers order goods from the food  
producer who organises collection and  
delivery with the Food Link Van driver.  
Producers invoice customers for the  
goods (payment should be made  
promptly in order to ensure a good  
working relationship and continuity of  
supply). The producer pays a levy to  
Food Link; see [www.foodlinkvan.co.uk](http://www.foodlinkvan.co.uk)

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## CONTACT DETAILS

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*'Skye & Lochalsh Food Link Group is a  
voluntary association of local producers,  
caterers, retailer and consumers with an  
interest in promoting locally produced  
food. Its members believe there are sound  
economic, environmental, health and  
community benefits to be gained from  
sourcing food direct from where it is  
produced'*

**Website** [www.foodlinkvan.co.uk](http://www.foodlinkvan.co.uk)

### **Annual Memberships**

Send cheque for £10, made payable to  
'Skye & Lochalsh Food Link Group'  
to Alison Oakes, Skye & Lochalsh  
Food Link Group, Old Mission House,  
Sconser, Isle of Skye, IV48 8TD

### **Food Link Van Levy**

Send cheques made payable to  
'Food Link Skye & Lochalsh Ltd' to  
Gloria Bain, Beach View,  
26 Fiskavaig, Isle of Skye, IV47 8SN

### **Marketing co-ordinator**

Email [lesley.linley@btinternet.com](mailto:lesley.linley@btinternet.com)

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## NEXT ISSUE

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Contributions are welcome for the next  
issue. Please submit by 30<sup>th</sup> November.

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## DISCLAIMER

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Whilst all information included in this  
newsletter is accurate to the best of our  
knowledge, Skye & Lochalsh Food  
Link Group accept no liability for any  
inaccuracies or omissions. The opinions  
expressed in this newsletter are not  
necessarily those of Skye & Lochalsh  
Food Link Group.

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