Local food, future directions

Friends of the Earth

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A report for Friends of the Earth

This report was researched and written by Helen La Trobe on behalf of Friends of the Earth

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Contents

Summary

The marketing of food is becoming increasingly unsustainable in social, economic and environmental terms. The globalisation of food systems and the increasing power and domination of transnational companies (TNCs) over food marketing are seeing small farmers' livelihoods undermined globally; increasing levels of food insecurity; declining farm incomes; loss of people from agriculture; and lost links between producers, community and the land. Globalisation and trade liberalisation are causing food to be transported ever longer distances between producers and consumers exacerbating environmental pollution and increasing resource use. We need a large-scale turn towards alternative food marketing systems based on re-localisation and promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability for people and communities across the world. Re-localised food systems have many benefits, including: food security for all people; fair prices for producers; shorter food chains and fewer food miles; increased links between producers and consumers; and undermining the power of TNCs.

The research has found that food schemes do bring benefits for sustainability and rural development. Farms involved in food production for local people tend to be small-scale which have benefits for on-farm biodiversity since small farms tend to be more diverse in their production activities. They also benefit local economies since more of their income remains circulating within local economies. Many of the food schemes sell only food they have produced themselves so that food miles are minimised, while others source as much as they can from other local farms. Owing to the 'hungry gap', however, some schemes do import food in order to add variety to their product range and increase their chances of competing with the supermarkets.

In terms of the benefits to local economies, many of the producers and farmers' market managers suggested that much of their turnover returns to local economies, as opposed to large-scale marketing outlets where most of the value of produce is siphoned away from local areas. Several producers also add value to their products, thereby ensuring more value circulates around the local economy. Several schemes and farmers' markets employ local people, providing another opportunity for money to be retained within the local economy.

Concurring with the findings of this study, it is now often accepted that re-localised food systems have a beneficial role for sustainability and rural development. However, the issues that are often overlooked are the barriers that may impede progress towards localising our food systems. While the current research has examined existing local food schemes and the benefits they have for social, economic and environmental sustainability, the outcomes have focused on the barriers that may stand in our way as we move from globalised to re-localised food systems. From these barriers, it has been possible to set out a number of policy recommendations – focused at the regional level – as to how local food systems can be promoted and developed by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in the future. The study has focused at the regional level because there exists a vacuum in the activities occurring at this level. Local food schemes are being developed in many areas but there is a lack of co-ordination, facilitation and provision of services at the regional level. For example, some regions lack co-ordination between producers, processors and marketers, or do not have regional co-operative processing and marketing facilities that can be used by local producers within the region. RDAs therefore have a role to play in filling this vacuum between small-scale very local-level projects, services and facilities and those available at large-scale and national levels. Local food links and food futures projects have already begun this work, but the RDAs can further facilitate and develop this assistance more widely.

Several barriers to re-localised food systems have been highlighted by this research, including: competition from large-scale marketing outlets; consumer shopping habits; buying patterns of large-scale food procurers; the supply of local food; lack of infrastructure; prohibitive legislation and

bureaucracy; government attitudes, for example to planning applications; access to resources; and skills in the local food sector. The recommendations to RDAs focus on overcoming some of these barriers and suggest that a ‘Local Food Co-ordination Team’ should be put in place within each RDA that can deliver a ‘Local Food Action Plan’ to co-ordinate and facilitate the development of the local food economy. The role of the Local Food Co-ordination Teams would be: regional networking, co-ordination and co-operative infrastructure development; training, advice, awareness raising and information sharing; funding; increasing consumer awareness; lobbying; and research.

This report focuses initially on the current trends and problems associated with the increasingly globalised and liberalised trade in food and agricultural products. It then suggests a range of possible alternatives that can help us reach the goal of re-localised and sustainable food production and marketing systems. The views and opinions of the people and organisations consulted during the course of this research are then discussed, particularly in relation to what they feel are the barriers and opportunities for the re-localisation of food and agriculture. The final section makes several policy recommendations aimed at RDAs and how they can facilitate the development of re-localised food systems. .

Where we are now:
Problems with mainstream systems for food marketing

Declining farm incomes and loss of people from the land

Post-war agricultural restructuring in the UK has had many negative impacts on farmers, including declining farm incomes[1]; uneven growth and wealth of farm businesses[2]; increased levels of indebtedness[3]; a shrinking share of the 'food pound' returning to farmers[4] and loss of farmers from the land[5]. Recent trends in declining farm incomes have been described as dire: in 1999 the National Farmers' Union(NFU) revealed that net farm incomes had dropped by 75 per cent in three years and were the lowest in real terms since the 1930s[6]. Welsh hill farmers make an average of less than £6,000 a year, farmers in the South East can now expect £8,000 a year[7], and the average farm income is estimated to be just £5,200[8].

The number of people working in rural areas has fallen sharply since the middle of the twentieth century. In 1955 agriculture constituted 26.1 per cent of the total labour force in the European Community (EC), declining to just seven per cent by 1986[9]. In the UK alone, agricultural employment is now closer to two per cent of the working population[10]. Between 1995 and 1999, eight per cent of the total agricultural labour force left farming, with 1999 alone accounting for 3.3 per cent of those losses[11]. This is partly the result of the downward pressure on farm incomes which forced many, particularly small farmers, off the land. Between 1952 and 1991 the numbers of holdings in England and Wales decreased by 38,000 (28 per cent) and the largest reduction (by 47 per cent) occurred in smaller farms of 50-99.75 acres (20-39.9ha)[12]. This trend has been continuing with more than 450 farmers and workers leaving agriculture each week[13]. Over the two years prior to June 2000, a total of 51,300 farmers and farm workers left the land, representing the biggest exodus from farming in living memory[14].

The loss of people from agriculture is a trend that is occurring on a global scale: it has been estimated that 30 million jobs have been lost as a result of trade liberalisation and associated factors[15]. In China, where 92 per cent of the population worked on the land in 1979, the abandonment of collectivised agriculture and the efforts to integrate rapidly into the global economy have seen this figure reduced to just 42 percent. In one year alone, 10 million Chinese peasants left their land[16]. The Vision 2020 plan for transforming agriculture in Andhra Pradesh, India, from subsistence production to farm consolidation and mechanisation is expected to cause the loss of 20 million small farmers from the land (a reduction from 70 per cent to 40 per cent of the population working on the land). This Vision 2020 is being supported by a grant of £65 million from British aid money[17].

Loss of small farmers from the land has resulted in the distribution of land in the UK becoming highly skewed with 16 per cent of the largest farms accounting for 58 per cent of total farmed land[18]. This is a negative trend in terms of sustainability because small farms benefit rural economies: relatively smaller farm sizes with integrated farming systems can be 200-1000 per cent more productive than large-scale monoculture farms. In the US, the smallest farms of 27 acres or less have more than 10 times the dollar output of larger farms and, while income earned by large corporate owned farms is drained off to distant corporations, income from small family farms remains circulating around the local economy[19]. Occupiers of very small farms have an essentially beneficial role for rural society[20] and the characteristics of small farms most closely resemble those required for a sustainable food system[21]. Yet the government agriculture departments for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland suggest that further restructuring, faster productivity growth and an even faster run down in the numbers of farms and people working in agriculture are required in order to rebuild farm incomes[22].

Competition and shifting power relations in food systems

The 'power' that farmers, manufacturers and nation states once had in food systems has been gradually undermined by food retailers and transnational companies[23]. Nation-states are becoming nothing more than passive players in an increasingly globalised food system. In India, rather than the State transferring control for production, marketing and trade to farmers as it withdraws from agriculture, it is instead handing it over to global agribusiness, further disempowering and dispossessing small farmers and landless labourers[24]. It is suggested that in the 1980s, the 'state' handed over to UK food retailers the key responsibilities for managing the British food system, regulating it through private interest and effectively making retailers into legitimate agents for the 'state'[25].

Participants in the food chain, other than producers themselves, therefore tend to be increasingly influential. Producers' reliance on inputs, credit, transport and technology from corporations working in the food chain has resulted in control over food production shifting away from the farm[26]. Supermarkets are gaining increasing control over the prices they pay for products[27] and farmers are generally in a poor position to negotiate. Dairy farmers, for example, receive less than ten pence for a pint of milk while supermarket customers pay at least three times that amount[28]. Similarly, farmers can receive only 18 per cent of the price of mince, eight per cent for sirloin and 14 per cent of the price of swede in the supermarkets[29], with farm-gate prices sometimes being insufficient to cover even the production costs.

To increase their control over prices paid, supermarkets tend to source direct from as few suppliers as possible, rather than from wholesalers, which results in competition between farmers to secure their custom[30] and enables the big retailers to obtain favourable terms from their suppliers. Horticultural farmers are particularly vulnerable to supermarket price pressure owing to the perishable nature of their fresh produce[31]. Supermarkets usually refuse to sign any contracts and at most may make a verbal agreement for a farmer to supply a certain quantity of food over a specified time period.[32] For producers unable to meet the exact quantity and quality requirements of the supermarkets, their orders may be dropped completely or changed at a moment's notice[33].

Supermarket control is part of a trend which has seen the food distribution sector concentrated into fewer hands so that competition between distributors becomes limited[34]. By 1996, supermarkets controlled at least 50 per cent of the total food market in all but three countries of the EU[35] and, as corporate retailers add value to farm products, they have come to dominate the maintenance and regulation of food networks[36]. Concentration in the food retail sector has squeezed family run independent grocery shops out of business[37], evidenced by the closure of 44,000 shops - 31.2 per cent of the total - between 1976 and 1987[38]. In 1986, butchers accounted for 37 per cent and supermarkets for 35 per cent of total meat sales. Just four years later, the butchers' market share had reduced to 29 per cent of total meat sales while the supermarkets' share had increased to 45 per cent[39]. By 1996, supermarkets were selling 80 per cent of all food purchased in the UK[40] and an estimated 70 per cent of all horticultural goods[41].

This trend is also occurring elsewhere: agri-food systems in Latin America have undergone rapid changes in the last decade, particularly in downstream sectors such as retail and food processing. During the 1990s the supermarkets' share of the Argentine retail sector increased from 20 to 80 per cent and in Brazil food purchases from supermarkets have increased to 72 per cent as the control of the ten largest supermarkets almost doubled from 23 to 44 per cent between 1994 and 1999[42].

In the UK, as in other countries, small local producers who are unable to meet the volume and timing requirements of larger retailers rely heavily on small local outlets. A study of local producers in an area of East Suffolk found that 81 local food shops were sourcing produce from 295 local and regional producers, and that the development of a superstore nearby would threaten or destroy 67 of those retail outlets[43]. For producers who are too small to serve the supermarkets, the loss of independent local shops is a very real concern.

Globalisation and free trade

One of the main forces behind the transnationalisation of food systems is 'globalisation' which refers to the "increasing integration of the world economy, and to the decreasing capacity of national state governments to follow policies which diverge from the interests of international capital"[44]. It also refers to changes in the international economic order that together have compounded the marginalisation of developing countries[45].

Globalisation involves the liberalisation of trade, fuelled by organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and agreements such as the Agreement on Agriculture and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Trade liberalisation policies are based on the [outdated] theory of comparative advantage[46] which states that for countries to gain maximum benefit from foreign trade, each should devote itself to the activities it can do most cheaply and then trade with one another[47].

At its simplest, this means to buy low and sell high, regardless of how important a certain product might be to the local culture and economy. So, for example, if Mexico can buy corn more cheaply elsewhere than it can produce domestically, it should abandon domestic corn production and switch to other products, such as tomatoes, that it can sell to other countries unable to produce them so economically[48]. This leads to specialisation by countries in only the activities they are better at so that a greater quantity of fewer goods is produced and then the surpluses are traded[49]. The theory of comparative advantage, however, assumes no externalities[50] so that prices of goods do not reflect the full costs of production and distribution, such as the environmental damage caused by long-distance transport or the social costs of undermining livelihoods and local cultures: inefficiencies are therefore introduced which result in mistaken comparative advantages and distorted trade[51].

Subsidies in agriculture further distort the market and limit truly 'free' trade. The process can also lead to countries becoming dependent on imports of certain products, resulting in vulnerability to the potentially irregular flow of those goods. In 1973, for example, when the US restricted exports of soybeans as a result of drought related shortages, prices of European meats increased because farmers had relied on the soybeans as animal feed. The only positive outcome was that Europe increased local cereal production to ensure a constant supply[52].

In developing countries, globalisation and trade liberalisation through the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture are having negative impacts on people's livelihoods, food security and the environment[53]. This is particularly since many farmers in developing countries now grow food for export markets and so produce fewer subsistence crops for local consumption resulting in hunger and malnutrition amongst themselves and their local communities. In a study by the Food and Agriculture Organisation it was found that out of 14 developing country case studies examining experiences with the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture, the cost of food imports between 1995-98 exceeded 1990-94 levels in all cases. Increases ranged from 30 per cent in Senegal to 168 per cent in India and outweighed any gains from increased exports. For two countries - India and Brazil - the food import bill more than doubled, while in a further five it increased by 50-100 per cent[54]. Export subsidies from Europe’s Common Agricultural Policy also undermine people's food security and farmers' livelihoods in developing countries as cheap food products are dumped on developing country markets, undermining the livelihoods of local farmers who are then unable to sell their crops on their own domestic markets.

Lost links between people, community and land

Industrial agriculture has replaced artisan modes of production so that the connections people once had with place and the land have been lost[55]. People are removed both physically and psychically from where their food is produced[56] and therefore have little knowledge of how and by whom their food is produced, processed and transported[57]. These processes of separation tend to destroy human communities[58]. When people are distanced in this way, they are unaware of any environmentally and socially destructive impacts that might be associated with buying food produced unsustainably. Without this knowledge, people are not empowered to act responsibly and effect changes in these processes[59].

Rural producers are experiencing a different kind of separation - they are feeling isolated as many are forced to work alone, unable to afford employees. They may also feel culturally isolated from their local community: the high population turnover in rural areas has meant there are many new incomers in rural areas who often have a poor understanding of rural life and complain about farm activities, so that farmers now feel isolated even from their own local communities[60].

Distancing between producers and consumers

Centralised food marketing systems are increasing the distance between producers and consumers. The food miles associated with large-scale centralised distribution systems are unsustainable in economic, social and environmental terms. It is estimated that each item of food now travels 50 per cent further than it did in 1979[61], while shopping trips in 1996-1998 were 40 per cent longer than they were just ten years earlier[62]. The average pound of food in America travels 1,200 miles (1931km)[63] and changes hands half a dozen times between producer and consumer[64]. A report examining the miles travelled by food via UK large-scale storage and distribution systems revealed that potatoes and apples covered an average 3,000 miles (4827km) before reaching Birmingham's shops[65].

Fresh produce is often air-freighted, which is particularly energy intensive, using 47 times as much energy to carry a quantity of goods by air as it does by boat[66], and yet the volume of air freighted vegetables into Britain increased by 15 per cent in just one year between 1993 and 1994[67]. In response to supermarket demands for quality, freshness and speed of delivery, large horticultural producers and exporters in Kenya have set up their own freight companies and also charter cargo planes enabling produce to be on UK supermarket shelves within 48 hours of harvest[68]. Food transport trends such as these consume fossil fuel and cause air pollution, processes that are incompatible with sustainable food systems.

In order to provide diversity of food products and year-round supplies of fresh foods, strawberries are air-freighted from Guatemala in December; parsnips from Australia in August[69] and apples are transported from New Zealand[70]. These movements may also include exporting and importing the same product: in 1997 the UK imported 126,000 million litres of milk and exported 270,000 million litres[71], and in 1996, imported 49 million kg of butter, while exporting 47 million kg[72].

Excessive distances travelled by food are often the result of cheap, non-renewable fossil fuel energy and reductions in the cost of transport, in real terms, through subsidies and investment by others (often taxpayers) who cover the external social and environmental costs[73]. Strain is also put on natural resources from the processing and packaging requirements to keep food fresh while in transit. Processing uses vast amounts of energy while packaging consumes natural resources and generates waste if it is not recyclable[74].

Organic food miles

While organic farming is more sustainable than conventional production methods, the distribution of organic foods can undermine this sustainability. While demand for organic produce in the UK is increasing, the shortfall in supply from UK farms means that 70 per cent of the organic produce currently sold in the UK is imported[75]. In the UK, just over one per cent of agricultural land is currently farmed organically[76] which is poor when compared to Austria with 10 per cent and Switzerland and Finland with seven per cent of their farmland already converted[77].

Vegetable box schemes generally sell organic produce, but when they import their produce the sustainability of the production system is undermined by the energy used in long-distance transport. Forty per cent of the produce supplied through UK organic box schemes is currently imported from continental Europe[78]. Entrepreneurs have cashed in on the success of vegetable box schemes by setting up nation-wide organic vegetable deliveries to people's doors[79]. It is difficult to reconcile the organic philosophy with the use of non-renewable energy to transport foods to distant markets[80]. There is also the issue of food security for people in developing countries that must be considered. Owing to the greater economic wealth of people in the North, much of the organic food produced in developing countries finds its way to these premium markets so that it is therefore unavailable to local people[81]. Local resources should be used to produce food for local people rather than to gain export earnings by providing for rich consumers in the North.

People's perceptions of organic farming and food are related to the idea of localism and that the value of organic food resides in its local production and consumption, so that people know where and by whom it has been produced[82]. When 'direct' marketing box schemes import some or all of their produce, the direct link is broken, the localness undermined and the value of knowing where and by whom the food is produced is lost. Schemes that import produce do not promote local food for local people, while long-distance transport of organic food undermines the philosophy of sustainability generally associated with organic farming and genuine local box schemes[83].

Animal welfare

Large-scale food marketing systems tend to be linked to large-scale production facilities, including those used for farm animals often called 'factory farms'. The approach used in these farming systems is to gain the maximum yield from the animals: efficiency is therefore the paramount concern and the animals are used as production units with no concern paid to their health and welfare[84]. Animals in these systems never see the outside world, living their lives crammed into barren overcrowded cages, or, in pig production, sows are isolated for weeks on end in stalls so small they cannot turn round[85]. Broiler chickens suffer excessively throughout their short lives: stocking densities are such that by the end of their lives they have an area less than an A4 sheet of paper within which to move and it has been found that 90 per cent of broilers have leg problems[86]. Even supposedly welfare friendly schemes have been associated with bad practices: the Freedom Food Scheme, for example, might use methods such as debeaking of hens, farrowing crates and tail docking of pigs, while hens do not have to be free-range[87]. Even in free range systems, birds are often de-beaked and fed unnaturally while the size of the houses, large numbers of birds and lack of port-holes mean that only 50 percent of the birds ever find their way outside[88]. Animals may also be transported long distances between the farm and the abattoir which causes them great stress. Sustainable localised food and farming systems would ensure that animal welfare and behavioural concerns were prioritised. The need for long-distance transport of animals would be overcome as small local abattoirs would be an important part of re-localised food systems.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity in natural ecosystems has been replaced with simplified systems of a few crops[89] and most food produced now comes from an increasingly narrow genetic base[90]. This is fuelled in part by large-scale marketing channels that require standardised products with extended shelf-lives and that are suited to long-distance travel, resulting in only a few crops being grown[91]. Even within individual crops only a limited range of varieties are currently grown. Of the 4,000 catalogued apple varieties in the world today, 2,300 are represented at the National Fruit Collection in Brogdale and 500 varieties of pear[92] and yet only two apple and three pear varieties dominate UK orchards[93]. Eighty varieties of potatoes can be legally grown in the UK, but only three varieties of new potatoes are grown on two thirds of the land, with potatoes being selected for their processing qualities rather than their environmental or nutritional value[94]. Diversity of products grown between different areas is also reduced when production is for the global market, and biodiversity is lost as industrial farms exclude wildlife from the land[95]. Monocropping also provides areas of food where pests can thrive, while diversity in crop types and varieties helps resist pest attacks and minimises the risk of every crop species being lost: genetic diversity, then, is suggested to be fundamental to food security[96].

Where we could be going: The alternatives

Local food

In order to understand the types of food and associated projects that should be promoted for the development of sustainable local food systems, we need to determine what is meant by 'local food'. A definition based purely on geographical distance of food sourcing is inadequate for encapsulating the fundamental features that must characterise truly local food. Based on the issues raised earlier, it is important to consider the social, economic and other environmental attributes of the food, rather than simply the distance over which it is transported between field and plate. In considering these issues, genuinely local food should bring a range of benefits besides being local only in geographical terms. Genuinely local food should therefore:

- Bring economic welfare benefits to producers and local communities. This can be achieved through short food chains that ensure local production, processing and marketing so that more of the value for local products returns to local producers and remains circulating within local economies. This therefore excludes the sale of local food through supermarkets because they siphon off value to distant corporations.
- Deliver food security and health benefits by increasing access for all people to healthy fresh food. This will require encouraging schemes and marketing mechanisms that bring local food to ‘food deserts’ and food insecure areas.
- Bring environmental benefits by diversifying agricultural systems to meet local demand for a diverse range of products. This excludes sales through supermarkets which sell an increasingly narrow range of crop types and generally only those which travel well and have a long shelf-life.
- Bring environmental and health benefits by ensuring food travels the minimum distance possible: here the proximity principle must be applied so that the most local source available of a product must be used to supply local needs. This excludes sales through local supermarkets since they transport food away from the local area to a centralised processing centre, they may then transport it further to a centralised distribution centre before transporting back to the supermarket branch next to or local to the field in which the food was produced.
- Bring environmental and health benefits by ensuring the food is produced using diverse sustainable farming practices. This reduces the use of artificial chemicals, pesticides and fertilisers which in turn ensures there are no dangerous chemical residues in food and reduces environmental pollution.
- Bring social benefits through closer contact between producers, consumers and the land. Where possible, direct contact between producers and consumers should be encouraged, but at the very least, short food chains, so that people can be more aware of where, by whom and how their food is being produced. This way, farmers can increase the contact they have with their own local communities.

In short, local food should be produced and processed as locally as possible using diverse sustainable agricultural practices and marketed through direct or short supply chains to local people, ensuring a fair price for producers and an affordable price to all people. Any food that cannot be produced locally should be ‘imported’ to the region, but it must be ensured that it adheres to the principles of fair trade and sustainable agricultural production practices, and is sourced according to the proximity principle.

Sustainable local food and produce systems

A sustainable local food system has several key attributes. In environmental terms, it encompasses ecologically sustainable land-use and marketing systems, it is rooted in a particular place and it uses local seasonal foods. In economic terms, it is economically viable for producers and the local community, ensuring fair prices for producers and that more of the value for local produce remains circulating within the local economy. In social terms, it is just/ethical, healthful, diverse, culturally nourishing, and enhances social equity and democracy[97]. In a sustainable food system, relationships between people along the food chain should emphasise responsibility, communication and care for people and the land[98].

Sustainable local food systems may include schemes such as farm shops, farmers' markets, food box schemes and community supported agriculture, for example. The direct relationships that develop between producers and consumers in these schemes can benefit economic, social and environmental sustainability. Local food schemes enable direct relationships between producers and consumers to be built on trust, while the direct contact encourages people to re-educate themselves about how food is produced[99] and enable consumers to gain some influence over how their food is produced, thereby improving the quality of the food they consume[100]. The direct contact with the person who has grown, reared or produced the goods enables customers to speak to producers and be more certain that they are buying local quality food[101]. In environmental terms, produce in local direct marketing schemes travels relatively few miles between producer and consumer[102] which reduces fossil fuel use and associated pollution. Supplying local food to local markets also increases the availability of fresh food to all people, while reductions in transport and pollution benefits people’s health[103].

Re-localised food and produce systems can also have social benefits for producers and local communities. Developing sustainable local food systems tailored to the needs of local people provides an opportunity for revitalising communities[104]. Farmers, who may otherwise work alone or with their partner, are able to build social connections with local people, enabling them to feel part of their community. People's involvement in the local community contributes to their sense of identity, while globalisation damages community connectedness[105]. When distances between producers and consumers are reduced, people start to care more about food and how it links them to the land, while producers are able to contribute more to the viability of their local community[106].

Forging closer links between farmers and consumers through direct marketing initiatives also has benefits for the local economy[107]. The best way to build a sustainable local economy is to begin by developing a local *food* economy, which entails farmers producing as much as they can for local markets and consumers buying as much of their food as possible from local producers[108]. Many commentators argue that strengthening local economies by using local resources to satisfy local needs can be a way of achieving local sustainable futures[109].

In large-scale and globalised economies, less of the value for rural produce is returned to the local economy. Whereas fifty years ago at least half of the 'food pound' found its way back to farmers and the rural economy, today only nine per cent returns to farmers, while marketing takes 66 per cent[110] so that less money is retained by the local economy. Supermarkets, for example, can siphon as much as 95 per cent of their takings away from local areas to shareholders and distant corporations[111].

A useful model employed by some proponents of local self-reliance to describe the way in which value is lost from a local area is to think about the local economy as a bucket which invariably has holes in it. Every time something is bought from outside the local economy money leaks out, and when raw materials are exported, value tends to be added elsewhere which could have been added locally instead[112]. It is therefore important to try to 'plug the leaks' by finding out how money leaks out and by creating ways of retaining more value within local communities[113]. "Buy-local" campaigns help prevent money leaking out of the local economy, whilst also assisting local businesses to survive in the face of subsidised corporate competition[114]. Sustainable agriculture, local food systems and direct marketing are important ways to 'plug the leaks', while adding value to local produce before it is sold, such as through local processing, is also key to ensuring more value remains within the local economy[115].

The Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food has also recognised the economic and wider benefits of local food marketing for farmers and for the wider concerns of sustainability, as their 2002 report outlines:

> *"One of the greatest opportunities for farmers to add value and retain a bigger slice of retail value is to build on the public's increasing enthusiasm for local food, or food with a clear regional provenance. Local food markets could deliver on all aspects of sustainable development - economic (by providing producers with a profitable route to market), environmental (by cutting down on the pollution associated with food transportation, and by interesting consumers in how the land around them is farmed) and social (by encouraging a sense of community between buyer and seller, town and country)…We think the time has come for locality food marketing to become mainstream in Britain as it already has in France and elsewhere"*[116].

Their call for local food to become mainstream must be promoted and enabled at all levels from local to national policy-makers, to the European Union and the WTO: communities must be allowed to discriminate in favour of their own local food producers in order to rebuild strong local economies and increase food security for all people everywhere.

Examples of local food schemes and associated projects

Farm shops

Farm shops have long been an important way for farmers to sell direct to their customers and, when successful, can make a significant contribution to farm income[117]. They can range from farm gate sales, such as eggs with an honesty box system, up to large high-turnover retail outlets open 364 days of the year. Some farm shops sell all organic produce while others sell mainly conventionally produced lines; some sell all their own produce while others buy in food to offer greater variety[118].

Farm shops enable the farm to 'get on the map' and this local identity means the role of the farmer becomes better respected[119]. However, the downsides to farm shops are that they can be very expensive to establish and run, and also rely on customers being able to get to the farm shop, often by car. This may increase driver shopping miles and is unlikely to increase the access of people living in low-income areas and food deserts to fresh healthy food. For the farmers, farm shops put extra demands on the farmer in terms of marketing skills and extra labour[120].

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are not a new idea, but with the advent of supermarkets and the change in traditional markets away from local goods to sales of wholesale produce, town markets declined[121]. The idea has been [re]imported from the US where numbers of farmers' markets increased from 200 in 1976 to around 2,400 by the mid 1990s[122]. Numbers in the UK have increased rapidly from just one in 1997 to 395 in 2002[123]. Central to the farmers' market idea is that the produce on sale must be from a locally defined area in close proximity to the market; must have been grown, reared, baked or made by the producers themselves; and stalls should be attended by the principal producer or someone directly involved in the production process[124].

Most markets have a 30-40 mile (48-64 km) radius within which producers must reside, although this depends on the individual situation, and produce at the London markets comes from within 100 miles (161km) of the city[125]. The markets enable producers to retain more of the value for their products and also ensure that more of the money for local produce remains circulating within the local economy. Although farmers' markets often take place in urban areas, the produce on sale is often high-value 'niche' market produce and, consequently, may not increase the access of low-income groups to fresh healthy food.

Box schemes

Food box schemes are a relatively new phenomenon and numbers have grown rapidly from just one in 1991 to over 200 now operating in the UK. Schemes range from small farms supplying their local area to large schemes supplying thousands of customers across the country[126]. A box system is a simple marketing mechanism whereby the customer receives a weekly box of fresh, usually local, seasonal vegetables with the quantity in part being determined by yield[127]. In this way, box schemes are able to provide farmers with market stability[128] and a secure and predictable income[129] and it has been suggested that they can make the difference between whether or not small-scale growers are financially viable[130]. Some schemes sell other products such as meat, dairy produce, bread and eggs.

Distribution of the food varies: some schemes use drop-off points, some deliver door-to-door and others may use a combination of both. While vegetable box customers are unable to specify the contents of their box, they are able to express a few likes and dislikes and schemes will often provide a choice of 2 or 3 different sizes at varying prices[131]. Some box schemes use only the products they themselves produce, but may buy in vegetables if there has been a failure, and therefore continue only while UK produce is in season. Others may import produce in order to continue their scheme throughout the year. Links between urban agriculture and box schemes are now emerging and these produce some of the box food with the remainder bought in from other UK organic producers. One such scheme is 'Growing Communities' in London where the boxes are delivered by bicycle, thereby further enhancing the sustainability of the scheme[132].

Food box schemes often have open days and farm walks so that customers can see where and how their food is being produced, and a newsletter keeps customers up-to-date with farm activities[133]. Contact between producer and consumer varies: some box schemes have low levels of social contact with very little, if any, connection between producers and customers, while others enable a high level of face-to-face contact[134]. Sustainability in box schemes varies since some serve customers hundreds of miles away and this increases distances travelled and reduces opportunities for contact between producers, consumers and the land. However, the food they sell is usually organic which has benefits for the environment and for people's health.

Community Supported Agriculture

Community supported agriculture (CSA) has evolved in different ways in different places as farmers, their friends and local communities experiment with new social structures[135]. The CSA movement originated in Europe and Japan in the mid 1960s[136] and was exported to the US from Switzerland some 20 years later. It is suggested that there are over 100 initiatives in the UK where producers work in partnership with consumers[137] and these are likely to reflect at least some of the principles and organisational features of CSA schemes.

Community supported agriculture is created where a group of people agree to share the risks and responsibilities of farming with a producer and in return the group can become more involved with the farm and with growing their own food[138]. This helps CSA sharers feel a sense of ownership of the scheme and its produce[139]. This also ties farmers and sharers into a close social relationship, building interpersonal trust and a sense of community rooted in place, enabling sharers to feel responsible for and connected to the earth and its inhabitants[140]. Walks and open days enable further contact between the producer, sharers and the farm.

The land in a CSA scheme may be owned by the farmer, by one or more customers or leased from a land-owner or member of the local community. Sustainability rather than profit is often the central concern of CSA. Education is an important feature of CSA so that people work actively with nature and come to lead a lifestyle that is in tune with the seasons and adapted to food that can be produced locally[141]. Sharers and their children help in food production and this enables them to see how food is grown[142] which is so important in an age when many children are unaware that peas grow in pods[143] rather than freezer bags. The presence and participation of children in farm work enables knowledge to be passed between generations[144], thus ensuring that vital experience, knowledge and skills are saved and nurtured.

Central to many CSA schemes is that sharers pay at the beginning of the season for their share of the produce, providing farmers with money for necessary inputs, and agree to accept less of a crop if there is a failure, thereby sharing the risks of food production[145]. In return, farmers agree to provide local, fresh, chemical-free food once or twice a week throughout the growing season, and volunteers often organise the food distribution, advertising and other business matters[146].

The food is often distributed through a box or bag system, but others may have a farm shop, as have the two CSA schemes in this study. CSA farmers have a guaranteed market for their produce, and such schemes provide alternative marketing opportunities for small farmers unable to compete in the national or international marketplace[147]. Emphasis is placed on fair prices whilst also ensuring that the true cost of food production is paid, including internalising costs to the environment[148]. Not all CSA schemes survive, however, and in the US about 100 have folded as a result of production and management pressures[149].

The model outlined here is the most common model for CSA schemes, and has also been called 'subscription farming' or community shared farming. Other CSA models also exist, such as those where the land and farm are owned by the local community in a trust, co-operative or outright. Skills, machinery and resources may be shared between communities associated with these farms. One example is a farm in West Sussex where an agricultural community of about 50 people was established in 1988 and they purchase farm produce and are involved in the management of the farm. Food from the farm is distributed partly on a delivery round, the remainder being sold through a farm shop and local retailers[150].

Facilitators: Food Links and Food Futures

Food Links schemes

The Soil Association has for a number of years been encouraging more sustainable patterns of production and distribution for local food through the Local Food Links project (see appendix 1). This has led to the development of numerous local projects, including farmers' markets and vegetable box schemes[151]. With assistance, information and guidance from the Soil Association, a number of Local Food Links schemes have developed around the UK. These have usually been set up with the remit of increasing the availability, marketing and consumption of local (and often organic) produce, although the focus of each Food Links project does differ. The Somerset Food Links project was set up in 1999 to help facilitate increased trade in locally produced foods. The key aims of the projects are:

- To help producers sell more of their produce locally
- To raise awareness of the benefits of locally produced food

- To help consumers find ways to buy locally produced food[152].

The Links scheme has provided advice, training and grants to help producers and farmers develop their food businesses. It has also been instrumental in setting up farmers' markets and now supports a direct delivery service – called Somerset Farmers' Market Direct – for further sales of local food and drink. Somerset Food Links also works with consumers to help them access fresh affordable food by helping urban community groups to set up consumer co-operatives that can spread the costs of buying fresh foods.

East Anglia Food Links (EAFL) specifically assists local organic producers and offers advice and consultancy on organic food production, conversion and marketing. The scheme helps producers, retailers and the public:

- For producers, it provides subsidised production services to producers in the East Anglia Objective 5b area considering organic conversion or expansion;
- For retailers, it assists in sourcing organic or conversion produce from EAFL assisted producers, marketing support and training;
- For the public, they provide short courses in direct and co-op marketing; tailored training and advisory packages in setting up consumer co-operatives and buying groups; organise seminars on sustainable production and distribution; and provide general advice and support on the potential benefits of sustainable local food production for economic and community development[153].

The Devon Food Links developed out of Devon County Council's work towards increasing sustainability in agriculture and rural communities (LA21 Case Study Project, 1996). The project developed with the backing of the Soil Association and with European and MAFF Funding. There are a number of other local councils, health authorities and organisations, including the Rural Development Commission, Community Enterprise Unit, Taste of the West and local businesses that support the project[154].

The main aims of the Devon Food Links are:
- To increase local food production for local consumption
- To develop local marketing opportunities for local producers
- To promote organic production to meet local demand, and
- To encourage value added production[155].

The first phase of the Devon Food Links project provided grants to 72 projects based on processing facilities, farms, restaurants and retail outlets that are committed to organic and local marketing. They have also been very involved with the development of farmers' markets throughout Devon[156].

Food Futures

The Food Futures project was initiated by the Soil Association in response to requests for more structured support than the publications, seminars, workshops and feasibility studies focussing on the local food sector that had previously been provided. The Food Futures project is partly funded by the National Lottery's community fund, with projects being set up in both urban and rural areas. The Food futures approach is:

> "*…based on community development 'best practice' – designed to be participatory, to build on local achievements and to work with a diverse group including farmers, retailers, consumers, the voluntary sector, local governments and health authorities. Truly sustainable enterprises will only be realised if the people who use them are genuinely involved with their development. By their very nature the solutions need to be locally appropriate and locally owned to succeed.*

Thus community based food growing and distribution schemes are created, alongside networks which provide strategic support to the local food sector"[157].

To date, the Food Futures project has had many achievements, including setting up 100 new local food projects, establishing 11 new local food networks and securing £700,000 in new funding to support future local food work.

Benefits of local food and products

As discussed in the above sections, local production and marketing systems for food and other products can deliver a number of benefits for economic, environmental and social sustainability. These benefits are summarized below.

Benefits to economic sustainability

- By cutting out the middleman or encouraging short food chains, the farmer has more control over the price of the end product[158] and a greater share of the 'food pound' is returned to farmers[159] and this can therefore help sustain local businesses;
- More of the value of local produce remains circulating within the local community and expensive foods bought into the area are reduced[160];
- Buying local produce helps the local community become more self-sufficient[161];
- CSA and box schemes give producers a guaranteed market for their produce[162] and a secure and predictable income[163]. Producers can therefore spend their time growing food rather than looking for customers[164];
- Farmers' markets bring people into town centres and so can boost trade for other local retailers[165];
- Farmers have more opportunities to diversify their marketing outlets by selling to a loyal local customer base;
- Encourages, increases and supports local business, enterprise, and agricultural suppliers and services such as local abattoirs[166].

Benefits to environmental sustainability

- Marketing local produce to local people reduces distances food is transported[167];
- Farmers' markets encourage environmentally friendly production practices[168]. Producers at farmers' markets tend to be relatively small using few, if any, pesticides[169]; CSA and box schemes are generally associated with organic/biodynamic systems with the majority being certified as such; these practices reduce energy use in food production;
- Encourages quality food and animal welfare friendly production in response to consumer demands;
- Producers involved in local food schemes diversify the crops and livestock they produce in response to consumer demand[170] which increases on-farm biodiversity;
- Farmers' market products use minimal packaging[171] and processing, as do the other forms of direct marketing.

Benefits to social sustainability

- Local food schemes have a role in building and nurturing community and in solidifying bonds of local social relationships[172];
- Local food to local people, particularly through box schemes and CSA schemes, reconnect people with the land, their source of food and how it is produced[173] and therefore rediscover the seasonal rhythms associated with food production[174];
- Producers enjoy the social contact with their customers[175] and appreciate the opportunities for direct feedback[176];

- Farmers' markets provide a social meeting place for producers and consumers alike[177], while the social contact often enabled by local food schemes reduces the sense of isolation often associated with modern farming systems[178];
- Customers can speak to farmers and ask questions about where and how the food has been produced[179] and get to know the farmers which helps increase trust in producers and traceability of their food;
- Local food schemes are improving access to healthy, quality foods for inner city dwellers in food deserts[180];
- Organic farming tends to be labour intensive[181] resulting from more labour intensive farming activities, on-farm processing and direct marketing[182];
- People are guaranteed fresh, quality, healthy food at a price which is fair to both the producer and the consumer;
- Re-localised food systems encourage the transfer of skills between producers through, for example, mentoring schemes and farmer-to-farmer extension.

The research

Methods

Informants for this survey were drawn from a variety of different backgrounds in order to include the views and opinions of a broad spectrum of people involved in food and agricultural systems. Farmers and growers were selected from farm shop, delivery services and box scheme contact lists available on the internet and also from Soil Association producer lists. A total of 137 local food schemes were contacted with an e-mail survey and 47 replies were received. Farmers' market managers were also contacted using the contact list available on the National Association of Farmers' Markets web-site. A hundred market managers were sent an e-mail survey to which 40 responded. Local Food Links and Food Futures projects were also contacted, some by telephone and some by e-mail, depending on their preferences. Other people and organisations were contacted, some by telephone and others by e-mail. These included: Regional Development Agencies; Rural Development Services; regional Government Offices; F3 (The Foundation for Local Food Initiatives); Countryside Agency; Council for the Protection of Rural England; Soil Association; and Sustain. People included in the study were asked about a number of issues, but of particular importance were their views and opinions on the barriers to the future development of local food systems and how they felt these could be overcome. This has enabled suggestions to be put forward as to how agencies and organisations – particularly the RDAs – can assist and promote the development of local food systems in the future.

Findings

Farm size

The areas of land farmed for the local food schemes in this study vary greatly from 0.405ha to 6075ha (table 1), although the largest land area is made up of several farms that produce organic food for a very large box scheme serving 9,000-10,000 people. The average farm size (excluding the 6075ha because the number of farms this comprises is unknown) is 110ha, which is large when compared to the average UK farm size of 67ha. The UK has the biggest farm size structure in Europe, being nearly twice that of the second highest which is Denmark at 34ha[183]. The average farm size structure in this study may be skewed by the inclusion of a few very large individual farms which range up to 810ha, with 5 of the 6 largest farms being organic. Concern has been raised that some big 'organic' farms are in fact large-scale intensive industrial monocultures that simply refrain from chemical inputs[184]. Such farms will not have the social, local economy, biodiversity or animal welfare benefits that are generally associated with small-scale organic farms. However, the farmers with the two largest organic farms in this study – 749ha and 810ha – do seem to be concerned about the biodiversity value of their farms, the animal welfare benefits of organic farming and the wider benefits that organic farming can bring. They also grow a diversity of crops and rear a range of animals so that it is unlikely their farms are simply large industrial monocultures.

Table 1 Farm Size

Farm size (hectares)	Frequency	Percentage
5ha and under	15	41%
>5-10ha	2	5%
>10-50ha	6	16%
>50-100ha	5	14%
>100-200ha	2	5%
>200-300ha	2	5%
>300-400ha	0	0%
>400-500ha	1	3%
>500ha	4	11%
Total	37	100%

The majority of farms in this study are small-scale with 15 of the 36 farms (42 per cent) being 5 hectares or less and 23 (64 per cent) being 50 hectares or less. Other studies have found that direct marketing tends to be favoured by smaller producers[185]. Local food schemes provide useful sales outlets for small-scale farms since they do not aim for large quantities of standardised products but instead grow for quality, freshness and diversity[186]. This also concurs with the results of a Devon Food Links study of the local food sector in the South West which found that 65 per cent of producers farm less than 50 hectares[187].

Local food projects that support small-scale producers should therefore be promoted, particularly since it has been found that small farms are more productive per unit area than large farms and also ensure that more of their income remains circulating within the local economy[188]. Occupiers of small farms have an essentially beneficial role in rural society[189], while the characteristics of small farms most closely resemble the characteristics required for sustainable food and farming systems[190]. Local food schemes enable producers to retain more of the value for their produce and can therefore increase the economic viability of their businesses, helping them remain in farming. Support and encouragement should be given to re-localising food systems rather than promoting sales of local food through large-scale marketing systems.

Local, national and imported food

Local food schemes such as farm shops, farmers' markets, farm box schemes and CSA schemes are often considered to have relatively low food miles associated with them[191]. However, as table 2 illustrates, just over 5 per cent of the schemes in this study do not sell any food that has been produced within their local area (approximately 30 mile radius of their business). For schemes selling organic produce, accessing sufficient quantities of local or even UK organic food can be a problem. Demand for organic food in the UK far outstrips supply and the shortfall means that over 70 per cent of the organic food sold in the UK is imported[192]**.** Many of the schemes in the study do, however, sell largely local produce. Eight of the 13 schemes in the 81-100 per cent bracket sell 100 per cent local food.

Table 2. Percentage of local/national/imported produce

	Local Food		UK food (other than local)		Imported food	
Percentage of food sold	Number of businesses	Percentage of businesses	Number of businesses	Percentage of businesses	Number of businesses	Percentage of businesses
0%	3	6%	14	26%	12	22%
>0-20%	4	7%	14	26%	19	35%
>20-40%	7	13%	13	24%	11	20%
>40-60%	12	22%	2	4%	2	4%
>60-80%	12	22%	4	7%	1	2%
>80-100%	13	24%	0	0%	1	2%
Not specific	1	2%	6	11%	7	13%
No response	2	4%	1	2%	1	2%
Totals	54	100%	54	100%	54	100%

The majority of the projects have to supplement local produce with other UK produce, and most also import at least some of the food they sell, although several commented that this was to ensure adequate supplies during the 'hungry gap' in UK produce. This enables them to keep their schemes running throughout the year and continue to provide for their customers who may otherwise be tempted to shop elsewhere. One farm shop imports up to 90 per cent of the food it sells, and the producer argued that he needs to import this quantity in order to compete with supermarkets over choice and variety.

A number of issues are important to consider in terms of sustainability when importing produce from other countries. These include:

- European supplies (fewer food miles) versus support for developing country producers
- methods of food production versus food miles (eg. non-organic from South Europe versus organic from Latin America; imported food versus local out-of-season greenhouse crops)
- seasonality issues and the hungry gap – should people be expected to eat with the seasons?
- regional food versus imported food - it may cause less greenhouse gas emissions for Kent to import from France than to truck food from Scotland

Research is needed (some of which is being undertaken by organisations such as Sustain) to determine the characteristics that will provide the ultimate sustainable food system, but it is often the case that one dimension of sustainability is traded for another (eg environment for community).

Where possible, we need to be reducing the distances that food travels between field and plate, and yet the trend seems to be in the opposite direction. Demand for freight transport has doubled in the last 25 years, in part as a result of increasing international trade and economic growth coupled with completion of the EU's internal market[193]. Journey lengths are also increasing and this trend is set to continue as just-in-time deliveries – which mean that 30 per cent of all freight vehicles travel empty – are set to increase. This trend is having some worrying impacts. By 2010, greenhouse gas emissions from transport - currently the fastest growing area of these emissions - are forecast to increase by 39 per cent above 1990 levels. Importing 1kg of asparagus from California to Europe uses 900 times the amount of energy for transport than if it were grown domestically, while importing apples from South Africa results in 600 times the production of nitrogen oxide pollution than if the apples were produced within 30km of where they are consumed[194]. These trends for increased freight transport and increased food imports must be reversed and the most sustainable way to achieve this is for a large-scale turn towards localised food systems.

Turnover of schemes

Many of the schemes (43 per cent) within this study have a turnover of less than £100,000 a year (table 3) making them relatively small enterprises. However, some schemes are much larger, with one suggesting an annual turnover of £2.8 million. This particular business appears to be very successful: it has been in operation for 25 years, has 4,000 customers each week and now employs 25 full-time and 25 part-time staff. However, although their web-site says they sell quality local food, their questionnaire responses suggest that only 10 per cent of the produce they sell is local; 50 per cent comes from elsewhere in the UK and 40 per cent is imported. This particular scheme is therefore not likely to provide the social, economic and environmental benefits for sustainability that are generally associated with truly re-localised food schemes.

Table 3. Annual turnover of local food schemes

Annual turnover	Frequency	Percentage of businesses
£50,000 or less	13	24%
>£50,000-100,000	10	19%
>£100,000-150,000	4	7%
>£150,000-200,000	7	13%
>£200,000-250,000	1	2%
>£250,000-300,000	1	2%
>£300,000-350,000	2	4%
>350,000-400,000	2	4%
£750,000	1	2%
£1 million	1	2%
£2.8 million	1	2%
No response	11	20%
Total	54	101%[1]

[1] Totals more than 100 per cent due to rounding

The farm shop in this study with a turnover of £1 million, however, should benefit the local economy to a greater extent. This farm shop was established over 40 years ago and now includes other activities such as a farm restaurant using locally produced and free-range products. The farm itself produces at least some of its produce organically. Of the food it sells, 70 per cent is local, 25 per cent is sourced from elsewhere in the UK and only 5 per cent is imported. This therefore benefits the local economy because the money they spend on the majority of their farm shop produce remains circulating within the local economy. Furthermore, the scheme employs 25 full-time and 25 part-time staff. This business has been developed from humble beginnings when they started selling produce from their back-door over 40 years ago. One of the box schemes has an annual turnover of £750,000, employs 8 full-time people and sells 100 per cent local produce. However, the owners also estimate that only 25 per cent (£187,500) of their total turnover returns to the local economy, which is surprising low considering all produce is sourced locally and several people are employed.

Some producers process food on their farms to add value to their products. One farm makes a range of organic cereals and flours which it sells nationally through its own cereal marketing company. This company itself has a turnover of £500,000 and employs two people. The two CSA schemes also process produce. One mills all its own wheat and sells the flour in their farm shop and to the local bakery. It also has its animals slaughtered locally which are then butchered on the farm by their full-time butcher. This creates employment and ensures that much of the value of the farm's produce remains within the local economy. The other CSA scheme processes all its milk on-site into raw and pasteurised milk, yoghurts, soft cheese, cream and hard cheeses. One of the farm shops is planning to increase the size of its restaurant kitchen so that it can process local foods into products to sell in the farm shop, such as jams, chutneys, soups, cakes and ready prepared take-away meals. These are all positive developments for local economies, increasing local employment opportunities and strengthening local economies. Provision of local processing and distribution facilities and infrastructure is urgently needed to enable more of these activities in the future, particularly by those unable to afford these types of developments on their own farms.

Farmers' markets and the local economy

Farmers' markets can make very positive contributions to the local economy through enabling farmers to retain a greater share of the value of their products. This is only beneficial, however, if farmers are able to sell their produce in sufficient quantities to make it worth their while by significantly increasing the returns over and above that which they can earn from other outlets. It has been estimated that for a producer to earn £5/hour at a newly established farmers' market (producers will have start-up costs - figures estimated for Bath FM), sales of £600 would need to be achieved. At the first few Bath farmers' markets this figure was only attained by three commercial high value producers. A producer with a £300 income at that farmers' market and a 25 per cent return on revenue would barely have justified their time and effort. However, many producers are small-scale with a profit margin closer to 50 per cent instead of 25 per cent[195]. In reality, the farmers' markets are more than just a source of income – they have community, social and environmental benefits – and this is often why producers are prepared to continue when returns may be low. Farmers' markets also benefit other local businesses: in Winchester shops have reported an increase of 30 per cent in their takings on farmers' market days[196].

Table 4. Turnover of farmers' markets

Market turnover (stall-holder fees only – 14 markets)		
Market turnover	**Number of markets**	**Percentage of markets**
£1000 or less	1	3%
>£1,000-5,000	6	15%
>£5,000-10,000	6	15%
>£10,000-15,000	1	3%
Market fees and stall-holder turnover (16 markets. Stall-holder turnover mainly estimated by market managers)		
£10,000-50,000	4	10%
>£50,000-100,000	3	8%
>£100,000-150,000	4	10%
>£150,000-200,000	2	5%
>£200,000-250,000	1	3%
>£250,000-300,000	1	3%
£650,000	1	3%
No response / Don't know / Confidential etc	9	23%
Total	39	101%[1]

[1] Totals more than 100 per cent due to rounding

Some of the farmers' market managers gave an indication of total market turnover (table 4), including the pitch fee and the turnover of individual producers. One market had recently undertaken an anonymous producer survey which revealed that producers earned between £70 and nearly £1000, with an average stallholder taking of £400. It was estimated that nearly £12,000 is spent at each of the monthly markets, equating to a yearly spend of nearly £200,000. The market takes place 16 times a year so this may represent an average of around £6,400 turnover per year for each producer. Looking only at the financial viability of the market for producers, a return of just £70 is perhaps not viable when the time involved and expense of the stall and transport are taken into consideration.

The co-ordinator of several markets in one county estimated the total turnover to be around £1.5 million in 2001. A stall holder survey revealed that takings ranged from £170 to £2000, with an average of £500 per stall holder. Another market manager estimated the market turnover from a customer survey which revealed that the income from each market for the 27 stall holders to be around £10,000, averaging £370 per stall holder per market. The market runs monthly bringing an estimated £120,000 per year to the local economy.

Based on an anonymous survey, the manager of one of the weekly farmers' markets estimated the total stall holder turnover to be in the region of £2,500 per week. This market has an average of 25 stall-holders so the average taking is only £100. It was suggested that, due to the increase in customer numbers, the market should now turn over at least £150,000 a year, increasing the average takings to around £118 per stall-holder. This turnover is low and, while pitch fees are only £4 or £5 depending on produce type, it is not likely to be an economically sustainable marketing option for full-time farmers.

Money returning to the local economy

More than half the businesses in the study estimated the amount of their turnover that returns to their local economy (tables 5 & 6: data includes only those who gave both turnover and an estimation of money returning to the local economy). This might include spending on local produce and inputs, staff wages and money spent at other local shops and businesses. The figures for money estimated to be returning to local economies ranged from £340 to £750,000, with the average being £87,860 per business, or just over 50 per cent of turnover. Eight of the 29 businesses suggested the figure to be between 61 and 80 per cent of turnover, and six of these estimated it to be over 70 per cent. Three producers suggested that as much as 81-100 per cent of their turnover returns to the local economy. These figures are in complete contrast to supermarkets which may siphon as much as 95 per cent of their takings away from local areas to shareholders and distant corporations[197].

Table 5. Money returning to local economies

Percentage of turnover returning to local economies	Frequency of businesses	Percentage of businesses
20% or less	5	17%
21-40%	6	21%
41-60%	7	24%
61-80%	8	28%
81-100%	3	10%
Total	29[1]	100%

[1] Only 29 businesses supplied the information required for this estimation.

Table 6. Amount returning to local economies

Amount of money	Number of businesses	Percentage of businesses
<£5,000	2	7%
£5,000-£10,000	2	7%
£10,000-£20,000	6	21%
£20,000-£40,000	5	17%
£40,000-£60,000	4	14%
£60,000-£80,000	2	7%
£80,000-£100,000	0	0%
£100,000-£150,000	4	14%
£150,000-£200,000	1	3%
£200,000-£250,000	1	3%
£250,000-£300,000	1	3%
750,000	1	3%
Total	29	99%[1]

[1] Totals less than 100 per cent due to rounding

Community supported agriculture schemes arguably have the most positive benefits for local economies, communities and environments. Of the two CSA schemes in this study, one has a turnover of £100,000 with 75 per cent (£75,000) of the turnover returning to the local economy, while the second has a turnover of £225,000 with 50 per cent (£112,500) estimated to return to the local economy. In social terms, they make a great effort to involve the local community in working the land and, at least with the former scheme, there is a community of between 12 and 15 people living and working the farm together. All the food is produced using biodynamic methods of production which brings benefits to the environment and the farm's biodiversity. The farms also process much of their produce – milling for flour and animal feed, sheep and cows' milk for yoghurt and cheese, and butchering meat from their own and other farms. The only thing that potentially undermines the sustainability of the second CSA scheme is the amount of vegetables they have to buy from off-farm sources, resulting in economic losses from the local economy.

The New Economics Foundation's 'Plugging the Leaks' project has shown how beneficial local food schemes can be to local economies. A study of a box scheme in Cornwall using the 'Plugging the Leaks' economic toolbox found that for every £10 spent in a local organic box scheme, around £25 is generated for the local economy. This compares very favourably with the estimated £14 generated from the £10 spent in a typical supermarket. The study concluded that if every person spending money in Cornwall switched just one per cent of their spending to local produce or services, the result would be an extra £1 million going directly into the local economy each week. The £52 million this would total each year is more than the Objective One funding (£48 million per year) for the area and, using the multiplier effect, it was suggested that the total annual impact could be a staggering £130 million per year[198].

Accessing funding and grants

Producers were asked about funding and whether they had managed to secure any grants to assist them with setting up their food schemes. Some producers had managed to secure funds from a variety of sources, while 80 per cent received no funds, although some of these pointed out that they did not actually seek any when they were setting up. Funding received ranged from less than £100 up to £45,000 from MAFF.

Sources of funding accessed by producers when setting up their food schemes:

- Small fund from the Development Board for Rural Wales (now the Welsh Development Agency)
- £80 a month from the Prince's Youth Enterprise Trust
- £1,000 each year from the Regional Development Agency
- £2,000 loan from Women's Education, Enterprise and Training Unit (WEETU) Norwich and £300 from the South Norfolk District Council
- £2,000 from South Somerset District Council and £250 from Somerset Food Links
- £3,500 for expansion from Community Council Berkshire
- £6,000 from the Urban Regeneration Fund
- £18,000 from Middle England Fine Foods
- £45,000 from MAFF.

Clearly there is funding available but producers are not always aware of its availability or how they can access it. Local Councils, RDAs and development and regeneration organisations can be helpful to producers in accessing funds, particularly EU funding, for example. Producers also find business skills seminars, training and courses can be helpful for advice on how to complete grant and funding applications.

Most of the farmers' markets (88 per cent) received some funding to kick-start their projects (table 7). Funding received was most commonly less than £500 or between £1,000 and £3,000 to get markets started. The majority of market managers (64 per cent) now consider their markets to be self-sustaining, which should be the aim of these schemes rather than having to rely on continuous injections of capital grants. Thirty-one per cent said their markets were not economically self-sustaining. The source and amount of funding and grants received by market managers are listed in appendix 3.

Table 7. Funding for farmers' markets

Funding received for setting up the farmers' markets	Number of farmers' markets	Percentage of farmers' markets
None	12	31%
less than or equal to £500	4	10%
£500-£1,000	0	0%
£1,000-£2,000	3	8%
£2,000-£3,000	3	8%
£3,000-£4,000	1	3%
£4,000-£5,000	1	3%
£5,000-£6,000	2	5%
£6,000-£7,000	1	3%
£16,000	1	3%
Did not give details	11	28%
Total	39	102%[1]

[1] Totals more than 100 per cent due to rounding

One of the farmers' markets was successful in accessing funding from the Social, Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) Programme of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. This programme is distributing £13.94 million to disadvantaged communities across England and supports projects under the programme's themes which include local food production and marketing projects. The SEED programme is one of 14 new funding schemes working with the New Opportunities Fund to distribute National Lottery money through their green spaces and sustainable communities initiative (see www.foodfutures.org.uk/news/latest/seed.htm and http://seed.rsnc.org/). The SEED programme will therefore provide a useful source of funding for future local food schemes and local food producers should be made aware of this avenue of funding.

Employees

The majority of the businesses in this survey do employ people: 67 per cent employ at least one person part-time, while around 60 per cent employ at least one person full-time (table 8). A couple of businesses employ about 25 full-time and 25 part-time staff each. The total numbers of employees among all the schemes in the study are 230 full-time, 195 part-time and up to around 30 seasonal employees. These equate to averages of 4 full-time and 4 part-time per business. When the number of people working the land is calculated for the schemes included in this study, it is equivalent to 2.5 per 100 hectares – equal to the average in UK farming of 2-3 people per 100 hectares. This figure may be so low because producers often cannot afford to employ anyone and consequently are having to work very long hours to ensure their business is economically viable. The farmers' markets have provided some employment opportunities with 31 per cent employing a person part- or full-time to manage the markets.

Table 8: Employees

	Number and percentage of businesses					
No. of Employees	**part-time**		**full-time**		**seasonal**	
0	18	33%	22	41%	50	93%
1-5	26	48%	20	37%	3	6%
6-10	7	13%	6	11%	0	0%
11-15	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
16-20	0	0%	2	4%	1	2%
21-25	3	6%	2	4%	0	0%
26-30	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Total	54	100%	54	101%[1]	54	101%[1]

[1] Totals more than 100 per cent due to rounding

Local food projects can have a beneficial role in supporting small farmers and should therefore be promoted in the UK since small farms can provide increased employment opportunities. Smaller UK farms of less than 40.5ha have been found on average to require five times more labour, including family, than farms of over 202.5ha and, as such, contribute to the social fabric and employment opportunities of rural areas[199]. Organic farming is also labour intensive and requires people at different times of year, reducing the peaks in labour requirements associated with monoculture farms[200]. These higher labour requirements on organic farms are the result of more labour intensive farming activities, on-farm processing and direct marketing[201]. Local food schemes can provide employment opportunities in a local area and can therefore increase people's opportunities to participate in the local economy and community.

The food sector as a whole is a very important sector of regional economies as the South West of England RDA found with its food sector mapping project. The entire industry was mapped in order to determine the economic impacts and it was found that 3,000 food and drink producers make up the regional food sector. These businesses contribute £3.4 billion to the economy of the South West, making it the largest business sector in the region and employing over 90,000 people. Eighty per cent of the businesses are small family enterprises employing less than 20 people per business[202], illustrating the important role that small firms have in local economies. If all these products were sourced and sold through local food schemes, the positive impact on the region's economy could be enormous.

Assistance from established business support bodies (such as RDAs).

Producers were asked whether they had ever received any assistance from established business support bodies such as the Regional Development Agencies and the Business Link. 65 per cent responded that they had not, 28 per cent responded they had and the remainder (seven per cent) gave no response. A few commented that they had tried to get help with funding and advice but that there was so much red tape or that they had to "*jump through so many hoops*" that they gave up trying. Others said the business support organisations had a lack of understanding of agricultural issues or a poor attitude towards their requests. One producer also noted that the RDAs and the Rural Enterprise Scheme are only interested in funding very large projects – upwards of £70,000 – so that it is very difficult to get small grants for small projects.

Other producers have been more successful and have managed to access assistance, advice and funding for: marketing workshops; IT advice and training; developing contacts with the restaurant trade; employee contracts; and grants for training, marketing, staff appraisal systems, educational facilities (school room) and trademarking. Assistance had come from the Business Link, Business in the Community, Regional Food Groups, RDA, District Council, County Council, Local Food Links and Coalfields Community Project. The Business Link seems to have been the most helpful to producers in this study.

Of the Local Food Links and Food Futures projects, only one said that they had found their RDA to be very helpful while others suggested theirs were either slow to provide assistance or gave no help at all. One of the food links schemes suggested their RDA to be "*overly focused on the corporate food world rather than local and community-level activity*". This was reflected in the interviews with RDAs which generally revealed a poor understanding of local food. When asked about the activities they were involved in to promote local food to local people, they tended to speak of large-scale projects – such as links between producers and supermarkets – rather than small-scale sustainable local food projects (see appendix 2 for a summary of the activities that RDAs are involved in to promote local/regional food to local people). There was also a tendency to link local food to the Regional Food Groups. However, rather than promoting sustainable local food for local people, the Food Groups tend to concentrate on marketing speciality foods, often through large-scale marketing systems and sometimes for export. Local speciality niche market products are unaffordable for many, particularly low-income consumers and therefore do not provide a sustainable route for developing local food systems. There is a need for RDAs to be made aware of what is meant by 'local food' and sustainable local food systems if they are to be involved in promoting them in the future.

Ways to increase the availability of healthy food to low-income groups

Local Food Links and Food Futures project managers were asked for their opinions on how best to increase the access of low-income people to healthy food. One respondent noted that farmers' markets are irrelevant to the socially excluded because they are too expensive and not easily accessible due to poor public transport links. The other problem with farmers' markets is that they are very often unsuccessful in low-income areas because producers do not take sufficient money and are therefore not willing to support them. Vegetable box schemes deliver fresh fruit and vegetables to inner city areas but there are other problems to be overcome, such as encouraging children to eat fresh food: parents on low-incomes can only afford to buy food that they are sure their children will eat because they cannot afford to waste it. Popular highly advertised processed foods may not be healthy, but children are more likely to eat them so low-income parents may be inclined to buy these because they know there will be no waste[203]. Cooking skills present another problem to be overcome, as does access to cooking equipment and sufficient fuel. Project managers' opinions on how to increase the availability of fresh healthy food to low-income groups are set out below:

- Increasing income and/or benefit payments.
- Food growing schemes.
- Bulk purchasing of vegetable and fruit; consumer co-operatives.
- Farmers' market voucher schemes.
- Direct links between producers and consumers eg CSA schemes and box schemes may enable exchange of time for a weekly box of fresh organic vegetables.
- Community shops, bakeries and cafes.
- Cooking groups.
- Mobile shops selling local food to service deprived areas, such as the countryside and council estates. Products to be sold at, for example, 60 per cent of the market price, with the Social Services organisations making up the shortfall directly to the (approved) retailer based on his till receipts for the day agreed.
- Education to improve cooking skills; cooking events in family centres; food days and school events; nutritional education; mobile kitchen.
- Improve incomes and change the subsidy system so everyone can afford a healthy diet.
- Support local retailers and co-operatives so that healthy food is more easily and locally available.
- Curbing supermarket power and food advertising practices (especially to children).
- Better public transport.

Re-localised food systems: barriers and how to overcome them

All the people contacted during the course of this research were asked for their opinions on what they felt were the barriers to local food systems and how they might best be overcome. This section sets out these barriers and suggests possible solutions that can be used to promote and enable local food systems in the future. Following this is a set of policy recommendations for RDAs to provide them with some guidance on how they can best promote truly re-localised food systems.

Competition

Competition and the power of the supermarkets was a concern of many local producers and farmers' markets managers. They have problems competing with the apparent choice that supermarkets provide, and the power and economies of scale that enable them to sell food – particularly organic – much cheaper than locally produced food.

Barriers	Solutions
• buying power and economies of scale • convenience of supermarket shopping • consumers' perceptions that supermarkets sell 'cheap' food • competition from cheap imported organic produce sold in supermarkets • supermarket advertising budgets • the power of the supermarkets • free home delivery schemes offered by supermarkets • competition from large-scale web-based and mail order home delivery schemes	• restrict market concentration and the power of TNCs by enabling nation states to control the activities of TNCs; reverse corporately controlled trade and promote localisation • government regulations to stop unfair trading practices and an independent watchdog to protect both consumer and producer interests • ensure fair prices to producers through a 'fair trade' labelling scheme • fair prices to consumers • internalise external costs of food production and long-distance trade in food and other agricultural products, eg tax aviation fuel.

The last two barriers are particularly worrying for organic producers with box systems since the convenience factor of their schemes is now being matched by big business. Some producers felt their businesses would eventually be killed off by the supermarkets.

Consumer issues

Changing people's shopping habits will be one of the most difficult barriers to overcome. Funding can pay for infrastructure to be developed and producers might be persuaded to produce more food for local people, but getting people to buy it is more complicated. Local food has got to be lifted from its current niche marketing position and out into the mainstream.

Several people suggested that consumers generally appear keen to support local food but that this is not reflected in their weekly shopping. One of the local food links facilitators said that the local food economy is consumer led so that if people don't demand it, then it won't develop. This food links project did a feasibility study (in collaboration with the area's University) which revealed that only 1.6 per cent of people in the area buy local food. The food links project has now established a distribution and delivery scheme involving 30 producers. The food is stored in a warehouse and delivered direct to people's doors so it is very convenient, but still it has been difficult to encourage people to join and, to date, only has 67 customers. Another source quoted the results of an IGD survey which revealed that, while people are apparently concerned about how their food is produced and how the countryside is managed, only 11 per cent are actively trying to improve their understanding of how food is produced and change their purchasing decisions as a result.

The majority of people shop at supermarkets so the only way to ensure people are buying local food is to ensure supermarkets sell only local food when it is in season. However, this comes with all the problems of food miles (supermarkets' centralised processing, storage and distribution systems; just-in-time deliveries; lorries returning empty), price pressure and quality demands on producers, poor returns to farmers, profits in the hands of a few, money lost from the local economy and more waste of food and resources. The alternative - persuading people to shop through sustainable local food schemes that can be more time consuming and less convenient - will be difficult.

Barriers	**Solutions**
• lack of awareness of where to access local food • lack of awareness of the impact of supermarkets on our food supply • lack of awareness of the benefits of organic and/or local food • people perceiving supermarkets as a cheap and convenient option • buying on price instead of other factors • people not prepared to pay for organic and/or local food • people valuing cosmetic qualities over other qualities eg food safety; healthiness; flavour; production methods and possible impacts; place of production etc • low value of food and the environment • trend in one-stop shopping and the once-a-week supermarket shopping habit • lack of demand for local and UK produce • lack of understanding of rural issues; lack of school education about food production so there are no links between food, how it is produced and where it comes from • perceived lack of UK variety and volume - consumers are led to believe that supermarkets offer the ultimate in food choice and variety • public scepticism • local food is still for the middle-classes (due to price, niche marketing of speciality produce)	• directories of local food projects and initiatives • awareness campaigns about the negative impacts of supermarkets on people, environments and economies • make information about local food more readily available • make local food more 'visible' to consumers through labelling schemes etc • make it easier for people to choose local food by making it more accessible and reasonably priced (not by squeezing price to producers but by cutting out middlemen and changing the subsidy system) • promote the benefits of local produce purchasing for producers, consumers, health, the environment, animal welfare, local economies etc • education: teaching people to cook with local foods so children get used to these foods instead of Big Macs • education about the true cost of food • education in schools about food growing so children can learn about what they eat and where it comes from; eg. The Grow it, Cook it, Eat it projects set up in the South West; • encourage consumers to ask retailers about the sustainability of their purchasing policies; encourage them to campaign for local sustainable sourcing and for labelling schemes to describe food origin and environmental, social and economic conditions under which it has been produced

Several of the RDAs suggested that selling through the supermarkets should be promoted as a way of selling more locally produced food to local people. They are developing links between local producers and large-scale marketing outlets as a way of increasing sales of local food. One RDA is developing transport links between producers and supermarket distribution systems so that empty lorries, having made their deliveries to the local supermarket, can then collect local farm produce to return to the central storage and distribution centres. However, this type of link has the usual environmental, economic and social problems associated with selling to the supermarkets and ultimately does not present a profitable option for small-scale farmers.

The Curry Report recommends that "*retailers who give over a portion of their store as an outlet for local producers to sell direct to the public should receive business rate relief on that part of their premises*"[204]. If this was aimed at the independent retail sector it might benefit local producers. However, if the supermarkets are aided by this type of rate relief it would further undermine independent retailers and sustainable local food systems, while bringing more trade and profit to the supermarkets.

Other food procurers

Retailers, restaurants, catering establishments and public sector organisations should buy local food but often the infrastructure and capacity for supplying local food to these organisations on a large scale is lacking. It must be made easier for these businesses and organisations to source local food on a large-scale and this can be achieved through co-operative supply, processing and distribution activities.

Barriers	**Solutions**

• retailers prefer to keep paperwork to a minimum. Buying supplies from several small farms generates more paperwork
• local catering establishments may have:
    o lack of interest in using local produce
    o perception that local produce is more expensive
    o lack of awareness about where to buy local produce
    o potential difficulty in accessing it
• public sector purchasing is potentially very powerful, but many organisations are inhibited by WTO and EU rules
• lack of support from supermarkets for local food
	• develop producer co-operatives that can supply sustainable produce according to the proximity principle; this can ensure easy access to continuous supplies of diverse, fresh, sustainably produced food while also keeping the paperwork to a minimum
	• RDAs should lead by example by buying produce according to the 'proximity principle' so that food is bought from the most local sustainable source available
	• local food directories to enable local food to be more easily accessed
	• WTO out of food and agriculture; review EU purchasing rules to allow local food to be favoured by local businesses
	• promote the benefits of buying local produce
	• raise awareness of the environmental, social and economic problems associated with buying 'long-distance' produce

Problems with supply

One of the problems identified by several key people involved in the local food movement indicated that, while there is a lot of activity already being undertaken at the local level, there is a severe lack of co-ordination and co-operation among these projects. This results in duplication of effort and can lead to competition for resources. Clearly there is a need for collaboration between schemes and for networking between local activity to combine the effort, skills and enthusiasm for a positive move towards sustainable local food systems.

A recent development in the local food sector aimed at networking between sectors of the food chain is the Food Links UK. They have outlined the important role that the food links schemes have had in developing projects and networking between groups involved in the food chain. Clearly there is already work being carried out to link the disparate sections of food chains in order to promote joined-up thinking. This kind of networking needs to be promoted across the UK in order to re-develop the infrastructure required for a mainstream move to local food systems.

Barriers	Solutions

• lack of locally grown (organic) food
• farmers not wanting to participate in local food schemes, causing problems with meeting the demand for local food (farmers' market managers have commented that farmers do not want the hassle)
• access to markets and finding appropriate outlets for producers – particularly with the continued decline of independent sector shops which will reduce the availability of outlets for local produce. Small producers tend to rely to a greater extent on small shops
• seasonality of UK food and the hungry gap
• the numbers of farmers' markets have increased so quickly they now compete for local producers
• insufficient numbers of farmers converting to organic farming to satisfy the UK demand for organic food
• maintaining sufficient supply, demand and product quality
• local environmental conditions often favour the production of a restricted range of products insufficient to enable the development of local food systems
• high labour input for poor returns so must work very long hours to make a living or income must be supplemented elsewhere
• Difficult to employ people due to low profit margins
• lack of and difficulty in getting volunteer help
• lack of land available to people wanting to start up food growing projects
	• positive encouragement of the co-operative sector: co-operatives need to be set up particularly for smaller producers who are unable to supply in quantity
	• assist existing co-operatives to meet the needs of their customers
	• build networks between producers, markets, large and small food procurers, caterers and consumers
	• link producers with large food procurers, such as councils, schools and hospitals
	• local and regional food co-ordinators in each area to:
	  • enable joined-up thinking
	  • link community food initiatives
	  • develop links between all aspects of the food chain from production to consumption
	  • enable more co-ordination at the local, regional and national levels of local food networks to facilitate partnerships and access funds
	  • assist producers and marketing groups to work together to promote the benefits of local food to larger conglomerates (ie. the social and economic benefits)
	• Selling through the larger conglomerates may not provide a sustainable way to increase sales of local food because of the negative impacts associated with supermarket buying, distribution and marketing systems.

Supply-side infrastructure

Infrastructure development

Several Local Food Links co-ordinators said that the physical infrastructure for processing, packing and marketing food at the local level no longer exists. He pointed out that apples from Somerset travel to Hereford and Kent to be packed because there are no local packing facilities. He also said that there is no physical infrastructure between the scale required for supplying the farmers' markets and the distribution systems used by supermarkets – there are very local distribution systems and national ones but nothing in between at the regional and sub-regional levels. Local food distributed at this scale would make it easier for restaurants, retailers and caterers to obtain local food on a larger scale. Co-operative and decentralised supply, processing and distribution facilities are therefore required that can operate at very local, sub-regional, regional and, where necessary, national levels to supply local food at a larger scale.

Barriers	Solutions
• lack of locally orientated distribution systems and supply infrastructure is a key barrier: food distribution systems in the UK are mainly centralised regional or national systems • lack of local abattoirs, particularly those registered for organic, and expense (£90 to kill and return a beef animal) • lack of processing facilities • lack of linkages between projects and along the supply chain • lack of linkages, networking, integration and communication along the food chain • lack of co-ordination to facilitate partnerships and co-ordinate the 'draw down' of government funds; this has led to duplication of work and competition for limited funds (Local Food Links and Food Futures have done much to address these issues but this needs to be scaled up and spread across all regions) • scale: the small scale of local food marketing groups and systems; e.g. farmers' markets and box schemes are not sufficient to provide a major distribution channel to facilitate mainstream purchase and use of local food.	• scaling up (eg through co-operative marketing) and providing consistency and quality of supply to some of the bigger caterers • funding the development of local food processing units (dairies, millers, abattoirs and mobile abattoirs) for use by local food producers • rebuild the local infrastructure for local food to allow re-localised efficient wholesale and distribution systems to be developed; this will make it easy for businesses, retailers and public sector bodies to access local food • enable the development of co-operative urban farm shops: this allows the producers to be sited in a town centre location close to passing trade while also sharing the expense and time involved in running an urban farm shop • overcoming the seasonality problems by linking with a trading partner, in southern Europe for example, who could supply produce during the gap in local/UK produce. This should not be affected by WTO rules in the way that government initiatives can be if it is on a business-to-business basis.

Red tape, legislation, regulation and bureaucracy

Several producers said the strict hygiene, health and safety regulations regarding food processing make it very costly for small businesses. They also cited EU and WTO rules as barriers to the development of local food systems. One source quotes the EU's State Aid rules which state "*if references to national origin are made they should be subsidiary to the main message and should not constitute the principal reason why consumers are being advised to buy the product"…* This presents a barrier to developing labelling schemes that give overriding importance promoting products by site of production. A producer gave the example of meat hygiene rules which apparently say it is illegal for a butcher to cut up meat on his premises for another person to sell. The only way round it is for farmers to build their own facilities (costly) and for the butcher to process the meat there, but this leaves his own premises under-utilised. The only other option is to use the government approved plants linked to the supermarkets.

Problems	Solutions
• red tape, rules and 'needless' bureaucracy that surround food production • restrictive legislation favours the multiples and penalises small business • hygiene regulations increase costs to producers that are then passed on to consumers • lack of a level playing field across the EU (EU competition rules; competitive tender rules; state aid restrictions). State Aid rules are a barrier to governments being able to fund local food systems • need to get rid of the WTO	• review hygiene, health and safety regulations and legislation to make it less costly for small businesses; ensure that small businesses are not penalised in favour of large businesses • review State Aid rules so that governments can fund local food systems • change policies and legislation governing food procurement to enable public sector bodies and institutions to favour local food purchasing • WTO out of food and agriculture

Government problems

Some have suggested that the attitude of government to local food is causing a barrier to local food schemes. It was pointed out that government related bodies have an elitist view of local food that is based on 'locality' speciality foods which could 'ghettoise' local food into a niche accessible only by well-off people. This criticism has been levelled particularly at Food from Britain as a result of the role they have been given by the government in the Curry report and by DEFRA and the Countryside Agency. In terms of food being seen as only a niche market, one source suggested that we need to pull local food out of its niche and into the mainstream, pointing out that global trade used to be the niche and is now seen as the norm - this needs to be reversed.

Barriers	Solutions
• government attitude, for example to planning applications • lack of knowledge in planning committees of rural issues and needs • government is too tied up in bureaucracy and too much red tape • local food seen as being on the fringe of the work of those agencies involved in food and farming: it is therefore seen as low priority. Work on local food issues does not figure in the policies and strategies of the main agencies • lack of clear guidance for local authorities • absence of aviation fuel tax • assumption that local will always be a niche market • local food is cross-sectoral but there is a lack of ability for joined-up thinking • planning issues	• planning regulations should be amended to provide supportive and enabling policies to encourage the development of the local food sector, for example the development of local processing and marketing initiatives • lobby agencies - such as RDAs - involved in food and farming to highlight the role they should have in promoting local food • vertical collaboration on work on local food systems • horizontal collaboration and communication in work on local food systems • introduce a tax on aviation fuel to ensure some of the environmental costs of importing food by air are internalised • promote joined-up thinking for local food by creating a team within each RDA to be given specific remit of co-ordinating development of the local food sector (see below) • make it easier to diversify into/set up local food schemes by making it easier to get planning permission on infrastructure developments for sustainable local food systems

Access to resources

Funding, surprisingly, was mentioned by only a few producers but will clearly be a barrier to the development of local food systems. There are opportunities for accessing funding and grants but often people are not aware of them. Any organisation set up to co-ordinate the local food sector should therefore familiarise themselves with all the possible opportunities for funding so they can advise producers and facilitators of all possible options. Funding needs to be long-term because too often funding runs out and time and energy is spent finding new sources of money. The other kinds of resources that are needed relate to advice, information and specialist assistance for small local food businesses.

Barriers	**Solutions**

• the lack of and need for capital investment
• funding is only available for short periods of time
• funding a local food systems co-ordinator beyond three years: there is no joined up thinking – local food falls within too many government departments. There is no holistic approach, so half the project time has been spent gathering different pots of money
• money. The real problem at present is the change in EU funding which only permits one EU funding programme per proposal
	• reliable long-term financial support from RDAs, DEFRA, Countryside Agency and others for:
	  ◦ a 'seedcorn' fund, easily accessed by small food projects to develop the local food economy
	  ◦ pump-priming to get schemes going
	  ◦ assist farmers with the set-up costs of diversifying into direct marketing (equipment, scales, transport, refrigeration, training etc)
	• funding needs to be more available, more easily accessible and more flexible
	• price support for local food schemes in areas of poverty to make prices affordable
	• financial incentives for all parts of the supply chain to encourage them to adhere to the principles of sustainability when growing, processing and retailing food

Barriers and solutions for other resources and support:

Barriers	Solutions
• lack of support available to help projects get off the ground • lack of specialist business support • availability of resources: eg labour, volunteer support, machinery, business space, business knowledge and expertise • lack of a champion for the local food economy to increase political profile • engaging the community and sustaining their involvement over the long-term • land availability, tenure and security of tenure	• advice and assistance with accessing available sources of funding and grants • business support, advice, training and expertise for producers and community food groups • network support • dedicated workers in place to support projects on an on-going basis • planning systems that enable and encourage the development of local food systems • political and strategic leadership and commitment; a regional food broker or a 'political champion' needed such as a Minister for Food • lobbying and policy work • research and needs analysis with producers, consumers and community groups • research on the capacity of current supply to meet demands • map existing developments in the local and regional food sectors • professionalism so that proposals by local food pioneers are realistic and backed up by firm research

Skills in the local food sector

Producers expressed a lack of relevant skills available locally due to the loss of people from rural areas. Skills sharing – through mentoring schemes and farmer-to-farmer extension for example – must be enabled by any network organisation set up to promote the development of the local food sector. Farmers and growers find the most valuable learning experience is to pick up skills by working with others involved in local and organic food production. Farmers and growers often experiment with different production techniques which are then shared by word of mouth because these innovations are seldom written down. These and other existing skills therefore require special systems to enable them to be shared between farmers and growers. Producers may become involved in officially organised mentoring schemes where they will be matched up with a suitably experienced farmer or grower and spend time helping on their farm to learn new skills. These have proved very successful (eg. Devon Food Links) because the learning outcomes are tailored specifically to the needs of the producer. Others go on farm walks and visits where they pick up new ideas that they can take back to their own farms and adapt to suit their particular circumstances. Where new and innovative marketing schemes have emerged – for example in Devon with the first box scheme, or in Kent with CSA schemes – newcomers to direct marketing find it invaluable experience to spend time working with these 'pioneers' to learn the skills needed to operate a CSA or box scheme, such as planting times (need to be staggered to get constant supplies); quantities to plant, how much to put in the boxes, delivery methods etc.

The other area where skills are lacking, according to one source, is in the actual facilitation of local food schemes. Again, it will be necessary to ensure that people already involved in facilitating the development of the local food sector are enabled to share their skills with newcomers.

Barriers	Solutions
• lack of appropriate skills available locally; out-migration of skills from rural areas owing to lack of facilities, services and affordable housing • lack of horticulturists trained in organic methods (although plenty of unskilled people aspiring to the 'good life' but without the necessary commercial skills) • lack of skills to produce local food to scale • lack of business and marketing skills among local producers • lack of knowledgeable staff to carry out projects (Local food Links)	• provide incentives for young people to enter organic farming and horticultural training so the necessary skills for turning to re-localised food economies can be developed • develop and support schemes for peer visits, site project visits and farmer-to-farmer mentoring schemes to allow producers to share skills and experience (production and marketing skills) • provide support and fund training initiatives for producers to help them develop business and marketing skills • provide training and skills sharing between people involved in developing, advising and promoting local food projects

Recommendations to the Regional Development Agencies

People whose opinions were sought during the course of this research gave their views on how they thought the RDAs could best promote and facilitate the further development of re-localised food systems. Drawing on these views and opinions, a number of recommendations for RDAs are set out below.

Build a **Local Food Co-ordination Team** to deliver a **Local Food Action Plan** within each RDA to co-ordinate the development of the local food economy. This must facilitate the development of partnerships to enable the rebuilding of regional networks along the food chain. Collective strategies need to be facilitated in order to get local food into the mainstream and have some potential to compete with large-scale globalised food marketing systems. The development of re-localised food systems must be participatory, taking full account of the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Aims and objectives of the Local Food Co-ordination Teams

1. Regional networking, co-ordination and co-operative infrastructure development to make links along the food chain and enable the re-localisation of food networks across the UK. Regional networks need to be developed to link and co-ordinate supply, processing, marketing and distribution for local food. To enable the re-localisation of food systems, infrastructure needs to be provided. Objectives should include:

- developing co-operative local food processing units for adding value to local foods (abattoir, butcher, miller, dairy etc);
- assisting the development of local food producer co-operatives, distribution depots and marketing facilities that can co-ordinate the supply of larger quantities of food required by local retailers, caterers and public sector institutions. Where appropriate, these could be on the same sites as the processing units;
- funding the development of other infrastructure needs, such as sustainable wholesale distribution systems for transporting local food to local and regional consumers, businesses and public sector bodies etc;
- assisting with the development of new marketing opportunities, in particular urban co-operative farm shops to be supplied and managed by producers (as in France), and producer/consumer co-ops;
- developing links between landowners and landless people who wish to develop food growing projects supplying local food to local people;
- developing links with other regions in Europe as trading partners to provide food during the hungry gap;
- developing projects that have the specific aim of increasing the access of low-income groups to healthy food, such as consumer co-ops, mobile shops selling subsidised food in low-income areas, or increased links between low-income groups and box schemes/CSA schemes.

2. Training, advice, awareness raising and sharing information and expertise. RDAs have a role in providing advice and assistance and enabling the sharing of skills and experience. Expertise already exists among producers and facilitators for developing local food projects but this needs to be shared more widely. Producers starting up box schemes and CSA schemes, or learning practical sustainable land-use skills, find it extremely helpful - more so than formal courses - to learn skills from an existing organic farmer or box scheme co-ordinator. Farm walks and visits also provide useful experience and farmers often return to their own farm with new ideas that they can adapt to suit their personal circumstances. This hands-on experience should be promoted, advice provided, and awareness raised about the benefits of local food systems. Objectives should include:

- developing mentoring schemes between producers to allow farmer-to-farmer extension and knowledge sharing to enable the transfer of skills in sustainable land-use and marketing techniques;
- funding training, seminars and workshops etc targeted at local food producers to provide them with the necessary business and e-commerce skills for marketing their produce locally;
- funding training and mentoring between facilitators of local food systems to provide them with the skills and techniques to effectively develop local food projects with the full participation of local communities;
- providing advice, information and assistance on: how and where to apply for funding; completing applications for funding; assistance with planning applications for diversification projects etc.

3. Funding. Producers and local food projects have difficulty obtaining small loans and grants, and yet this is exactly the type of assistance that is required by small-scale producers and projects. Objectives should include:

- providing long-term funding opportunities for the developing local food economy;
- developing a strategy to enable individual businesses and community projects to access small and medium sized RDA capital grants to pump-prime new schemes (RDA building conversion grant schemes provide a minimum of £70,000 which is too large for most producers). This could be through a network organisation that brings together local producers, community groups, local people, independent retailers etc who can review funding applications and determine the best use of local financial resources. Funding supplied to such a network must be long-term to ensure its sustainability, otherwise too much time is spent searching for further funding opportunities to continue the work;
- funding the development of local co-operative processing and distribution centres, such as dairies and abattoirs, as required: different localities will have different needs according to the types of farming systems dominant in each locality;
- providing financial incentives to encourage all parts of the food chain to become sustainable.

4. Increase consumer awareness by:

- developing labelling and branding schemes for local sustainably produced food: for example, a European-wide ‘Fair Trade’ mark that guarantees the social, economic and environmental conditions under which food has been produced and also indicates the area of production;
- developing directories of local food producers, retailers and marketers to enable consumers and food procurers to easily find out where to access local foods;
- funding cookery demonstrations and classes with community groups particularly in low-income areas;
- promoting links between producers and local schools to:
    - increase young people's interest in food and farming issues;
    - increase their awareness of where and how their food is produced;
    - learn about the potential social, environmental and economic impacts of different food production and marketing systems;
    - help with cookery classes in schools;
- hosting consumer events that promote awareness of the benefits of local food and encourage participation in local food systems;
- awareness raising among consumers and other food procurers of the problems associated with buying long-distance foods and the social, economic and environmental benefits of buying local produce.

NB: It is very important that where local food links and food futures projects have already been developed, RDAs do not use valuable resources to duplicate or overlap work already undertaken or being carried out; RDAs should work in partnership with existing local food networks. When the current funding for Local Food Links and Food Futures projects comes to an end, RDAs could take over their long-term funding as part of their Local Food Action Plan work. This will enable continuation of the work already being undertaken by LFL and FF, while also removing the need for these projects to spend valuable energy and resources seeking new forms of (usually short-term) funding.

5. Lobbying

- lobby at the EU level for a change in purchasing rules to enable governments to promote the development of local food systems;
- lobby for the removal of the WTO from food and agriculture;
- lobby government to fund the development of re-localised food systems;
- lobby for increased conversion to organic farming and other forms of sustainable land-use;
- lobby for regulation of supermarkets.

6. Research

- research into the best places or ways to provide processing and distribution facilities. For example, should they be regional centres (which may be too far for many producers) or more localised infrastructure so that in areas where dairy predominates, local dairy operations and distribution facilities would be required;
- needs analysis to determine how local food systems can best be further developed: what do producers need; what do local communities need; what do retailers and food procurers need;
- map the activities already underway in the local food sector (this will also avoid duplication of efforts);
- consumer research to determine which outlets people would be most likely to use when buying local food (this will probably be supermarkets, unfortunately);
- research into the economic impacts of local food on local economies (furthering the NEF work);
- market research on the capacity of current and potential supply to meet demands;
- research into how retailers, caterers etc can be encouraged to source more local food (eg Ease of access; delivery rounds; cheaper produce);
- research possible links with south European regions as trading partners from whom produce can be bought during the ‘hungry gap’ (but this may break WTO rules).

Appendix 1. Local Food Links and Food Futures schemes

Role of Local Food Links and Food Futures

- co-ordinating Food Links/Futures projects
- hosting LEADER+ projects eg value adding to local produce
- preparing of business plans
- bidding for funding
- assisting in the development of food groups, producer co-ops,
- working on developing distinctive cultural links with food
- looking into funding opportunities to respond to the infrastructure needs of farmers
- campaigning
- producing newsletters
- supporting local food businesses and local marketing initiatives
- encouraging and enabling individuals and organisations to produce and eat safe, healthy, affordable food from sustainable sources including local and organic produce
- raising awareness of local food and its benefits
- supporting community action towards developing the local food economy and tackling food poverty
- supporting local food businesses in making local food more accessible and affordable
- developing the local food sector network
- contributing to relevant strategy and policy development

Projects facilitated or implemented by Food Futures and Food Links Schemes

- regional network development
- urban community gardens
- urban food growing and gardening schemes on allotments
- Food Access Partnership with a food co-op and fruit tuckshop
- mobile food co-op
- food buying co-ops
- community shop selling local food
- community 5-a-day project
- farmers' markets
- County Food and Nutrition group
- community food education
- local food network with workshops and newsletters
- commission research to identify barriers to healthy eating
- raising awareness of local food poverty issues
- grants to local community groups involved with increasing the access of low-income groups to healthy food and providing skills in food growing and preparation
- links between local schools and local producers
- fresh vegetables and local apples to primary school children
- educational projects for schoolchildren to make links between where and how food is produced and the impacts this has on people and environments
- encouraging schools to put in kitchen gardens
- enabling local sourcing for school meals
- a resource pack for schools containing information on how to develop a whole school approach to food and health
- Healthy Norfolk School project

- set up a distribution and home delivery scheme involving 30 farmers
- training events for producers wishing to sell at farmers' markets
- public meetings on increasing accessibility to local food for people, institutions, retailers and trade
- grants to local projects committed to local and organic marketing eg. box schemes, farmers' markets, community food growing schemes
- networking to develop new relationships
- developing links between local food producers and local tourism outlets
- local food directories
- county-level forum on village shops

Support provided by Local Food Links/Food Futures to local food projects

- workshops
- funding
- assistance with funding applications
- information and advice
- network and development support
- attracting support from other agencies
- co-ordination and facilitation
- newsletters for information and networking
- publicity and promotional support
- training
- advice and information
- self-help events
- facilitating farmer-to-farmer mentoring scheme
- enforcing farmers' market rules
- supporting links to local community radio
- community food directory

Appendix 2. Regional Development Agencies and promotion of [regional] food systems

RDAs were asked about the kinds of activities they are involved in to promote 'local' food to local people. The list below summarises their activities. As suggested in the report, there appears to be a poor understanding of truly 'local' food among the RDAs who tend, instead, to promote regional speciality foods marketed through large-scale food marketing systems such as supermarkets.

Funding

- supporting various schemes to the tune of about £1.5million. The assistance has been provided through the Regional Food Group
- Pump-priming for small collaborative ventures
- Redundant Farm Buildings Conversion Grant Scheme and this provides grants to individual businesses at up to 25 per cent: only available in the Rural Priority Areas (but difficult to get small amounts – I think the smallest is around £70,000)
- Funding the Farm Business Advisory Service
- Funding external posts working on local food issues
- Seeking other sources of funding for project pump-priming (as their own funding is public money)

Infrastructure / supply chain development / networking: these have been mainly large-scale projects linking supermarkets with local producers

- assisting producers' businesses to grow, for example by helping them gain entry to selling through the supermarkets
- developing links between producers and supermarkets
- enabling continuity of supply
- improving distribution facilities and supply chains
- working on integrating the supply chain
- enabling project development to be industry-led

Projects funded

- Peak District Quality Labelling Scheme
- beef and lamb quality labelling schemes
- farmers' market
- programme to develop producers' marketing and business skills
- set up a Sustainable Local and Speciality Food Project
- a Regional Farmers' Market co-ordinator (for one year)
- funds into the Countryside Agency's Eat the View Project
- RDA with DEFRA and other organisations provided £600,000 for the South West Food and Drink Group (Regional Food Group) – the leading trade body for producers and manufacturers
- Local food directories
- Remote skills training for the local food sector (>£215,000)
- PR and Marketing Campaign (£29,100)
- Grants for provisions of freezers and chillers for the use of local food in retail outlets (£8,000)
- Funds for farmers' markets improving the quality and co-ordination of farmers' market information (£10,000)

Research

- mapping projects to map the existing local food businesses in order to identify the opportunities and diversifications (commissioned the study)
- research to map the potentials and opportunities for local organic food production
- 'Plough-to-Plate' mapping and analysis
- examining the social, economic and environmental impacts of the food chain
- case study research
- MORI research into consumer attitudes to local food, commissioned by the Regional Food Group

Advice, information and training

- assistance by providing advice
- training programmes for developing producers' business and marketing skills
- working on developing training programmes with Sainsbury's and Somerfield for small suppliers in order to get local foods into supermarkets on a regional basis

Collaboration

- work with the Countryside Agency and the NAFM
- work with the Regional Food Groups
- work with Universities
- work with regional partners, such as North East Food Links
- one RDA has developed a Regional Food and Drink Strategy (RFDS) that joins up the whole of the food supply chain; it involves people from each sector along the food chain and the RFDS decides which projects receive funding

Promotion

- promoting local food to tourism outlets through the Food and Drink 21 project– a project of the Heart of England Tourist Board
- publicity (farmers' markets by the co-ordinator)
- encouraging public sector procurement of local food
- consumer awareness campaigns for local food and drink

Appendix 3. Farmers' market funding and sources

- Laura Ashley Foundation, Esme Fairburn Trust, SC Fund.
- Local Agenda 21 and local community chest
- Hampshire County Council and local and borough councils relating to the local area
- Town councils
- Costs covered by the Town Centre Management revenue budgets
- £215 from Tastes of Anglia
- £250 from the District Council and £250 from the Countryside Agency
- £400 from Friends of the Earth
- £500 from Eden District Council
- £1,000 from NWFF (North West Fine Foods) from the RDA (supports the NWFF??)
- £1,300 from Shell Better Britain
- £1,800 from Konver European fund as part of a county project to assist local food producers, grant contribution was approx £1,800
- £2,000 from SEEDA via South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)
- £2,400 LEADER 2 Grant
- £2,582 from Advantage West Midlands Shropshire Regeneration Partnership.
- £3,000 from Cheltenham Borough Council
- No funding at first. But later received £3,800 from the Royal Society for Nature Conservation's Social, Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) Programme for the purchase of stalls. Also some EEDA post-foot and mouth funding via Tastes of Anglia (£215) for promotion.
- £4,000 budget to run the pilots. £5,000 yearly funding from the council as the market has not become self-sufficient as hoped
- £5,000 from the Council
- initial £5000 for two pilots managed to get five markets for Aberystwyth. Antur Teifi manages the exiting project called Producer Support Service - Food & Craft Grant from Objective 1 for 3 years £400,000. Farmers' market only one part of the project.
- £6,000 from SRB government regeneration fund with match funding from revenue stream from pitch and stall hire
- £6,600 from Small Projects Fund, Empowering Enterprise in Local Communities, Herefordshire Council
- DEFRA grant of £12,000 for more advertising, purchase of our own stalls and set up of a web-site.
- £15,000 grant from the Merseyside Health Action Zone to pay the council for the use of the car-park (internal accounting)
- European Social Funds of £70,000 to run a stall-holder training programme in 2001.

Appendix 4. Useful resources

Food Futures

Calderdale and Kirklees:
Mira Kubala
Calderdale and Kirklees Food Futures
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
23 Estate Buildings
Railway Street,
Huddersfield HD1 1JY
Tel: 01484 223572
Mira.kubala@kirkleesmc.gov.uk
www.foodfutures.co.uk

Cornwall
Amanda Fielder
Cornwall Food Futures
Treglasta Eggs
Treglasta
Launceston PL15 8PY
Tel: 01840 261605
postmaster@amandafielder.demon.co.uk

Cumbria
Anne Bilbrough
Cumbria Food Futures
Voluntary Action Cumbria
The Old Stables, Redhills
Penrith CA11 0DT
Tel: 01768 242130
vac@dial.pipex.com

Dumfries and Galloway
Peter Ross
Dumfries and Galloway Food Futures
Dumfries and Galloway Health Board
Nithbank
Dumfries and Galloway DG1 2SD
Tel: 01387 244507
pross@dghb.scot.nhs.uk
www.foodpartnership.fsnet.co.uk

Dungannon and South Tyrone
Robin Brachi
LA21 Co-ordinator
Dungannon and South Tyrone Food Futures
Dungannon District Council
Circular Road
Dungannon BT71 6DT
Tel: 028 8772 5311
la.21@dungannon.gov.uk

East London
James Petts / Dan Keetch
East London Co-ordinator
Sustain
94 White Lion Street
London, N1 9PF
Tel: 020 7837 1228
james@sustainweb.org
www.sustainweb.org/cityharvest

Forth Valley
Angela Heaney
Sustainable Communities Officer
Forth Valley Food Futures
Stirling Council
Viewforth
Stirling FK8 2ET
Tel: 01786 442996
heaneya@stirling.gov.uk

Norfolk
Tully Wakeman
Norfolk Food Futures
49a High Street
Watton, Norfolk
IP25 6AB
Tel: 01953 889200
nff@eafl.org.uk
www.eafl.org.uk/nff

Nottingham
Lauren Kinnersley
Food Initiatives Project Officer
Nottingham Food Initiatives Group
Groundwork Greater Nottingham
35-37 St. Mary's Gate
Nottingham NG1 1PU
Tel: 0115 979 9227
lkinnersley@groundwork.org.uk
www.foodfig.org.uk

Powys
Richard Pitts
Powys Food Links, Powys County Council
St. John's Offices, Fiveways
Llandrindod Wells LD1 5ES
Tel: 01597 827573
richardp@powys.gov.uk

Skye and Lochalsh
Carole Inglis
Skye and Lochalsh Food Futures
Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise
The Green, Portree
Isle of Skye IV51 9BS
Tel: 01478 612841
c.inglis@hient.co.uk

Food Links

Devon Food Links
Jonathan Smye
County Hall,
Exeter EX2 4QD
Tel: 01392 382831
www.devonfoodlinks.org.uk

West Country Community Food Links
Jonathan Smye,
Westcountry Community Food Links,
C/o Economy & Europe Office,
Devon County Council, County Hall,
Topsham Road,
Exeter, EX2 4QD
Tel: 01392 382831
Fax: 01392 382849
E-mail: jsmye@devon.gov.uk

East Anglia Food Link
49a High Street,
Watton, Thetford,
Norfolk, IP25 6AB.
Tel: 01953 889200
www.eafl.org.uk
eafl@gn.apc.org

Forest Food Links
The Woodlands
Whiecroft, Lydney
Gloucestershire GL15 4PL
Tel: 01594 564773
Kate.deselincourt@localfood.org.uk

Herefordshire Food Links
Coed y Grafel
Walterstone
Hereford HR2 0DT
Tel: 01873 890675
Diana Palmer
Tel: 01873 890675, fax: 01873 890600,
http://www.greengate.org.uk/foodlinks/ggfoodlinks.htm
dianapalmer@btinternet.com

Oxfordshire Food Links
Mokes Corner
Berrick Salome
Wallingford
Oxfordshire, OX10 6JR
Tel: 01865 891197

South Oxfordshire's Agenda 21 is part of the **Local Food for Local People network** promoting locally produced food to shops and consumers. The group have produced the Oxfordshire Food Directory available from: susie.ohlenschlager@oxfordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01865 810148.
http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/service/Agenda21/Working_in_the_Community.html#Food
Jacqui Mansfield deals with local food issues: jamansfield@brookes.ac.uk

Somerset Food Links
Paul Sander-Jackson
South Somerset District Council
Area North, Old Kelways
Somerset Road, Langport
Somerset TA10 9YE
Tel: 01458 257438
www.somerset.foodlinks.org.uk
sanderjacksonp@mendip.gov.uk
paul.sanderjackson@southsomerset.gov.uk

West Dorset Food and Land Trust
Tim Crabtree
51 East Street
Bridport, Dorset
DT6 3JX
Tel: 01308 459050
timc.foodandland@dial.pipex.com

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

One North East
Great North House,
Sandyford Road,
Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 8ND
Tel: 0191 261 2000
Fax: 0191 232 9069
www.onenortheast.co.uk

North West Development Agency
PO Box 37, Renaissance House,
Centre Park, Warrington
Cheshire, WA1 1XB
Tel: 01925 400 100
Fax: 01925 400 400
www.nwda.co.uk

Yorkshire Forward
Victoria House, Victoria Place,
Leeds, LS11 5AE
Tel: 0113 394 9600
www.yorkshire-forward.com

East Midlands Development Agency
Apex Court, City Link,
Nottingham, NG2 4LA
Tel: 0115 988 8300
Fax: 0115 853 3666
www.emda.org.uk

Advantage West Midlands
3 Priestley Wharf, Holt Street,
Aston Science Park,
Birmingham, B7 4BN
Tel: 0121 380 3500
Fax: 0121 380 3501
info@advantagewm.co.uk
www.advantagewm.co.uk

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
SEEDA Headquarters,
Cross Lanes,
Guildford, GU1 1YA
Tel: 01483 484 200
Fax: 01483 484 247
info@seeda.co.uk
www.seeda.co.uk

South West of England Regional Development Agency
Sterling House,
Dix's Field,
Exeter, EX1 1QA
Tel: 01392 214 747
Fax: 01392 214 848
enquiries@southwestrda.org.uk
www.southwestrda.org.uk

East of England Development Agency
The Business Centre,
Station Road, Histon,
Cambridge, CB4 9LQ
Tel: 01223 713 900
Fax: 01223 713 940
knowledge@eeda.org.uk
www.eeda.org.uk

London Development Agency
Devon House,
58-60 St Katharine's Way,
London, E1W 1JX
Tel: 020 7680 2000
Fax: 020 7680 2014/2040
info@lda.gov.uk
www.lda.gov.uk

Other useful contacts

Soil Association
Local Food Links Team,
Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street,
Bristol, BS1 6BY
Tel: 0117 929 0661
Fax: 0117 925 2504
lfl@soilassociation.org
www.soilassociation.org

Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (F3)
PO Box 1234,
Bristol, BS99 2PG
Tel: 0845 458 9525
mail@localfood.org.uk
www.localfood.org.uk

Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
128 Southwark Street
London SE1 0SW
Tel: 020 7981 2800
Fax: 020 7981 2899
info@cpre.org.uk
www.cpre.org.uk

The Countryside Agency (Eat the View)
The Countryside Agency, John Dower House,
Crescent Place, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire, GL50 3RA
Tel: 01242 521381
Fax: 01242 584270
info@countryside.gov.uk
www.countryside.gov.uk/www.eat-the-view.org.uk

Big Barn
Online directory for farmers markets, farm shops and other local food initiatives.
www.bigbarn.co.uk

Farm Retail Association
Represents farmers selling direct through Pick-Your-Own, farm shops, farmers' markets and box-schemes. Online contacts for local food outlets.
www.farmshopping.com

Real Produce
Online network of British food producers. Find local producers and Farmers Markets.
www.realproduce.co.uk

English Rural Development Programme:

Government Office for the East of England (GO-EAST)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Martin Edwards (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service, Block B
Government Buildings, Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge CB2 2DR
Tel: 01223 455967
Fax: 01223 455823
martin.r.edwards@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Sue Buckenham (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service, Block 7
Government Buildings, Chalfont Drive
Nottingham, NG8 3SN
Tel: 0115 929 1191 Ext 308
Fax: 0115 942 5846
sue.buckenham@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the North East (GONE)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Fiona Gough (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Government Buildings, Kenton Bar
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE5 3EW
Tel: 0191 214 1800
Fax: 0191 2862362
fiona.gough@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the North West (GONW)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Tony Percival (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Electra Way, Crewe CW1 6GJ
Tel: 01270 754000
Fax: 01270 754280
tony.percival@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the South East (GOSE)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Nick Beard (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Government Buildings, Coley Park
Reading, RG1 6DT
Tel: 0118 939 2207
Fax: 0118 939 2120
nick.beard@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
David Sisson (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Block 3, Government Buildings
Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol BS10 6NJ
Tel: 0117 959 1000 Ext 3500
Fax: 0117 9505392
david.sisson@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Carol Deakins (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Block B, Government Buildings
Whittington Road
Worcester WR5 2LQ
Tel: 01905 763355 Ext 8274
Fax: 01905 764973
carol.deakins@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside (GOYH)
Rural Development Service (RDS)
Mike Silverwood (Regional Manager)
Rural Development Service
Government Buildings
Otley Road, Lawnswood
Leeds LS16 5QT
Tel: 0113 230 3900
Fax: 0113 230 3963
mike.silverwood@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Farmers' Market contacts

Southern Ireland

Skibereen (weekly)
The Fair Field
Contact: Jean Perry
Tel: 00 353 02820232
glebegardens@eircom.net

Wales

Aberystwyth (monthly)
Contact: Jan Fenner
Tel: 01970 633066
janf@ceredigion.gov.uk

Brecon (monthly)
Contact: Mrs Fiona Jones
Tel: 01874 612276
fiona.jones@breconbeacons.org

Bridgend (monthly)
Porthcawl (monthly)
Mrs Poppy Evans
Tel: 01443 226362
ross@llanbad.freeserve.co.uk
www.bridgendfarmersmarket.co.uk

Cardiff (monthly)
Steve Garrett
Riverside Community Market Association
Tel: 029 2022 7982
news@riversidemarket.org.uk
www.riversidemarket.org.uk

Haverfordwest (fortnightly)
Kate Morgan
Pembrokeshire County Council
Tel: 01437 776168
http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Lampeter (monthly)
Jan Fenner
Tel: 01970 633066
janf@ceredigion.gov.uk

Scotland

Ayr (monthly)
Irvine (monthly)
Kilmarnock (monthly)
Paisley
Contact: Howard Wilkinson
Tel: 01560 484861
howard.wilkinson@btinternet.com
www.ayrshirefarmersmarket.co.uk

Edinburgh (fortnightly)
Contact: Gary Henney
Tel: 0131 652 5944
info@edinburghcc.com

England

Bedford (monthly)
Contact: Brad Watts
Tel: 01234 221672
bwatts@bedford.gov.uk

Maidenhead (monthly)
Contact: Kath Pinto
Tel: 01628 416538 (eve) or
Diane Harker
Tel: 01628 670272 (day)
maidenheadfarmersmarket@care4free.net
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Ely (fortnightly)
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r_b_guiver@yahoo.co.uk

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market@peterborough.gov.uk

Crewe & Nantwich (monthly)
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philip.riding@crewe-nantwick.gov.uk

Knutsford (monthly)
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Cheshire County Council
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Lostwithiel
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Upton Cross (monthly)
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Brampton
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Egremont
Kendal
Ulverston
Whitehaven (all monthly)
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Hampshire
Aldershot; Alton; Basingstoke; Farnborough (every other month)
Andover; Winchester (monthly)
Fleet Hythe;Odiham; Petersfield; Ringwood; Romsey; Southsea (just a few organised)
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tessa.driscoll@hants.gov.uk
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Hereford, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye (monthly)
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Dane End (monthly)
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References

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