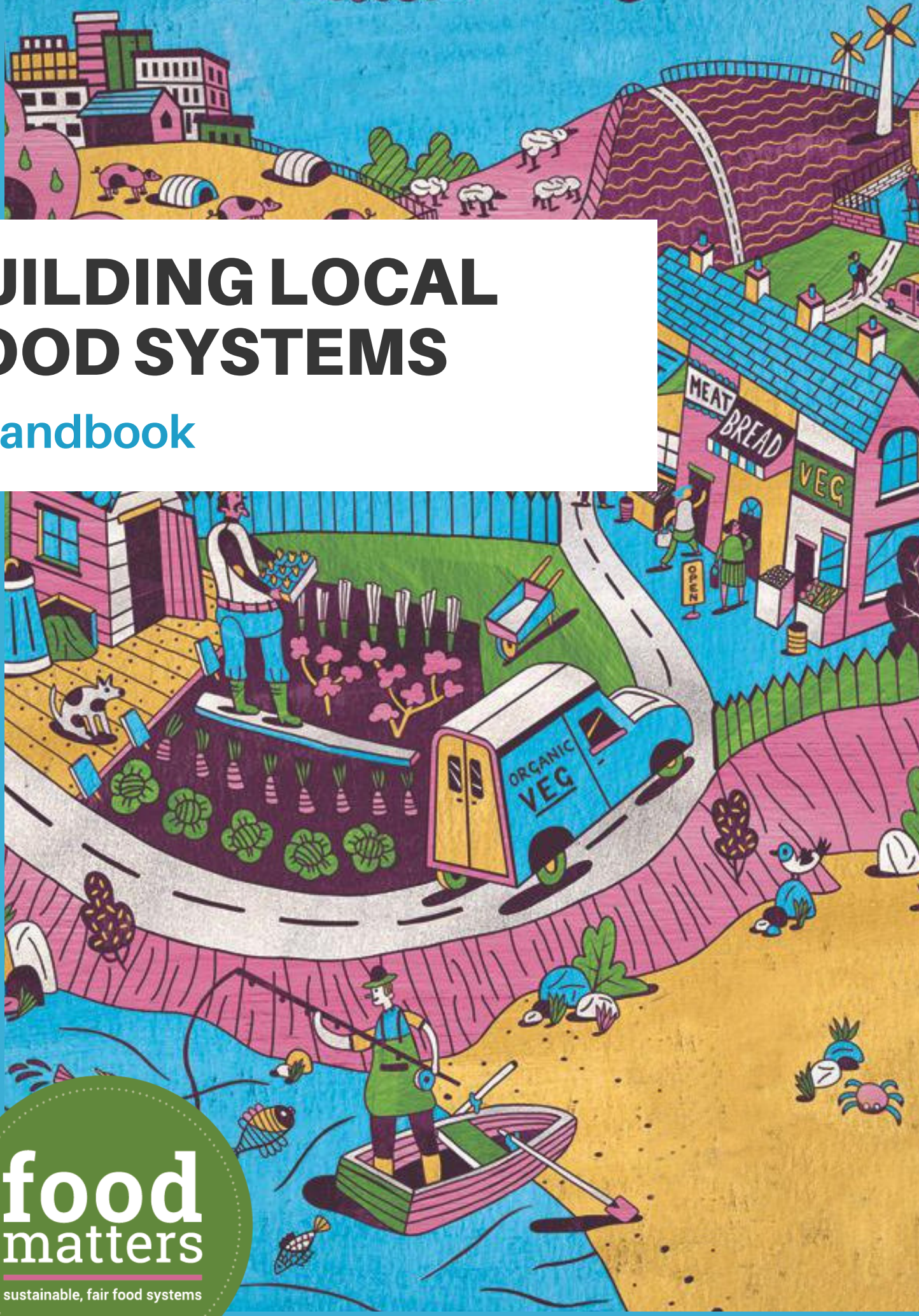
BUILDING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

A handbook



food matters

sustainable, fair food systems

Food Matters is a national food policy and advocacy organisation working on sustainable food policy issues and community food work, working for and with a variety of organisations on a range of diverse issues. Through consultancy, research, evaluation, training, project management and delivery, at both a local and national level, Food Matters works to create sustainable and fair food systems.

Food Matters believes that building sustainable food systems requires a localised approach, which gives communities a greater control of the food system. Food Matters has pioneered local food systems work in the UK through our work in Brighton and Hove, where for the last ten years we have worked successfully with community members and statutory agencies to create a sustainable food system in the city. Much of this work has involved training individuals and community food groups, and providing the skills required to better understand food systems and to make change. We can take credit for the development of the many food strategies and food partnerships that are now appearing in cities and towns, having led the way with the first community-developed food partnership and strategy in the city of Brighton and Hove.

This handbook has been researched and written by:
Leonard Gouzin
Victoria Williams
Clare Devereux
And designed by Leonard Gouzin

Front cover by Phil Wrigglesworth (www.philwrigglesworth.com), drawings by Vera Zakharov

The authors would like to thank all those that gave their time and expertise to help make this hanbook as comprehensive a guide as it is – to support the building of local food systems.

Food Matters
Brighthelm Centre
North Road
Brighton, BN1 1YD, UK
Tel: 01273 431 707

Email: info@foodmatters.org
Web: www.foodmatters.org

food matters
creating sustainable, equitable food systems

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Local Food

WELCOME

If you are reading this, you are probably fully aware that our food situation is in crisis.

Not a day goes by without a headline in the news about the increasing number of obese children in the UK, or the rising cost of food, or how many people in the world go to bed hungry every night, or the environmental impact of trucking our food around the country.

If you are reading this, you probably want to do something about it.

The good news is that, unlike many other pressing issues in the world, we can all do something positive about food. We all eat at least a couple of times a day and are making choices about what we eat all the time. We can make good choices and we can make bad choices. We may not always get it right, but thinking about the impact those choices are having – on our health, our environment, on the farmers who grow it, on the resources that go into producing our food – can really make a difference.

As individuals, we can bring about change every day through what we choose to buy and cook. But change also begins in our communities, and through action we can take together with our families, our neighbours, our local farmers, our local shops, and even our politicians. Together, we can assume more control over at least some of the food we eat, by understanding where it comes from, who has grown it, how it has been grown and how it has arrived on our plates. And we can even get actively involved in the process by growing our own, or helping a farmer, or setting up a food buying co-op, or influencing decisions made locally that will support a better local food system.

This handbook is designed to help you make change happen in your own community. It is based on two things. Firstly, it draws on the many experiences of people all over the country, indeed the world, who over recent decades have been working to rebuild their local food systems in the face of a growing food crisis. Secondly, it draws on the work undertaken by Food Matters over the past ten years, working in our own community of Brighton and Hove, in the southeast of England, to create a more sustainable food system in the city.

This work is not necessarily about overthrowing a dominant global industrial food system (although this may be the motivation for some!), but about recreating a viable alternative of which we can all feel part. It is about creating sustainable livelihoods, dynamic local economies, and about trading fairly with farmers and growers – both locally and all over the world. It is about protecting precious wildlife and fragile environments. It's about getting to know our neighbours, about building community, about sharing knowledge and learning new skills.

Above all, working to improve the food system is the right thing to do, because it can make a difference.

Who this handbook is for

This handbook is for you, as somebody who eats, shops, and cooks. Dip into the handbook for ideas and inspiration. We hope some of what you read will inspire you to action. It might also help you think differently about what you put in your shopping basket – even if it is as simple as buying a bag of carrots produced on a local farm.

This handbook is also for groups of neighbours, friends, family and community members who can come together – perhaps even for the first time – to do something a little bit more than place that bag of carrots in your basket. Perhaps you will start a conversation about the empty piece of land in front of your houses where together you can grow vegetables or salad to share. Or perhaps you will discuss starting a cookery class or food-buying co-op at the school your children attend.

The handbook is also for people who work in local authorities, or the local health service, and for community members who want to work with them at a strategic level to support a healthier and more sustainable local food system. There are ideas for how to work in partnership with different sectors – businesses, community groups, statutory agencies – to influence policy and planning to support a better food system in your area. Experience shows that without this level of support, it is often difficult to start projects or make lasting change.

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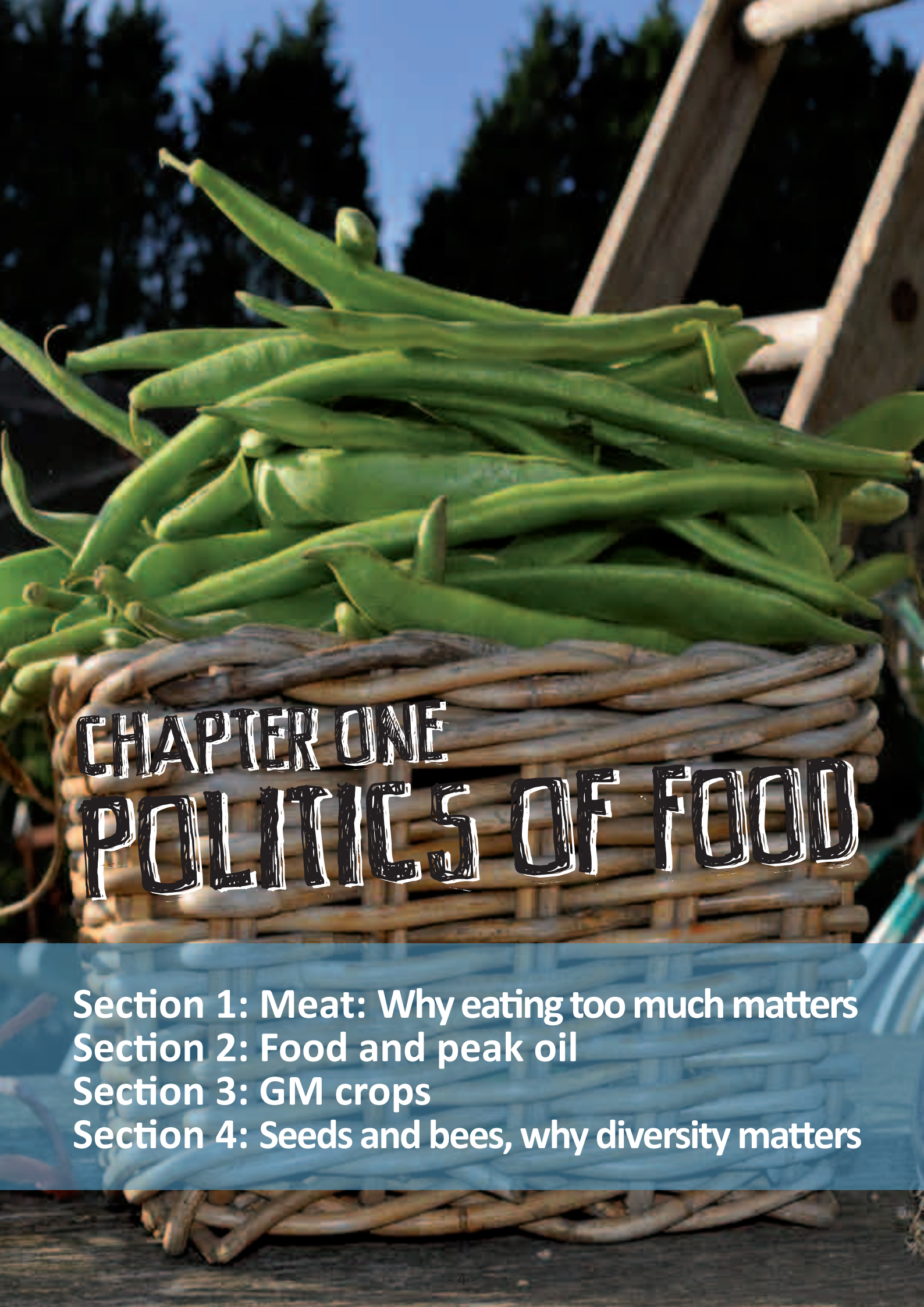

CHAPTER ONE
POLITICS OF FOOD

Section 1: Meat: Why eating too much matters
Section 2: Food and peak oil
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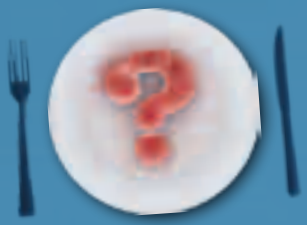
Introduction

How food is grown, processed, distributed and consumed today is a complex, global system subject to a variety of influences and pressures at local, national and international levels. To fully understand how our global food system operates, it would be necessary to be an expert in trade, international relations, geography, history, climatology, agriculture and anthropology. We can't expect to be all of these, but knowing something of the background to a few key issues that are particularly challenging, and why they matter, is essential if we want to know where we can make a difference. Understanding at which points in the food system we are able to make a change and where we are powerless to influence helps our efforts to be more effective. Ultimately, some change can only happen at levels out of our reach – for example, agricultural policy in countries such as the USA and Russia, major grain producers for the international market, is beyond our control. But our votes at both national and European parliament levels are important – or being a member of organisations which operate internationally such as Friends of the Earth or WWF can be a way of recognising the importance of these issues and supporting change. The following chapter outlines some of the debates about the current global food system and the issues we are facing.

Transport has revolutionised the way we eat. Produce harvested as far away as Asia can be served fresh in London the next day, when doing the journey used to take months. Can our global food system be sustainable again without affecting comfort and convenience?

POLITICS OF FOOD...

WHY EATING TOO MUCH MEAT MATTERS ?



It is now generally accepted that eating less meat can benefit both the environment and our health. Despite this, global consumption of meat is on the increase, particularly as developing countries get richer and people start to be able to afford more meat in their diet. But why does it matter?

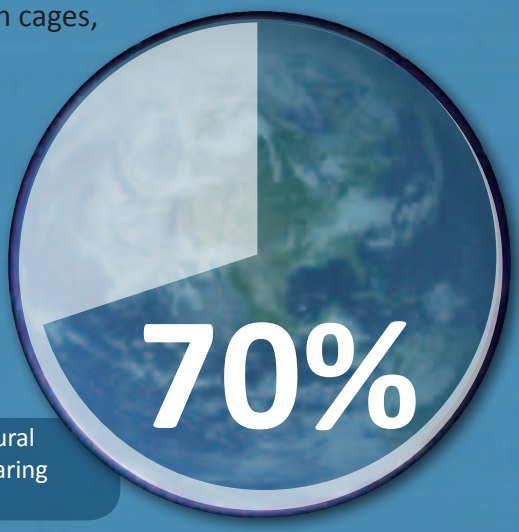
People's food habits have changed more in the past century than they have in the past tens of thousands of years. Industrialisation has revolutionised farming practices, especially since the Second World War. Chemical weapons research and post-war agricultural research resulted in the routine application of artificial fertilisers, farm chemicals and other technologies, resulting in massive increases in crop productivity. Food became easier to grow and animals quicker to raise. In Europe and North America, and now in developing countries across the globe, this marked the beginning of a growing appetite for more animal products such as meat, cheese, milk and eggs, symbols of wealth and good living. However, in the late 1990s, after a series of food scares including Mad Cow Disease (BSE) and food poisoning outbreaks (such as E-coli and salmonella), there came a growing awareness of the environmental and health impacts of high levels of meat consumption. We are now all too aware of the high cost of eating excessive animal produce on our health and the environment, yet reducing consumption is a sensitive and challenging problem to address.

So why does it matter?

For health: A range of diet-related diseases such as bowel cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure (hypertension) and high cholesterol levels have all been linked to a diet high in consumption of meat, particularly red meat, resulting in millions of avoidable deaths globally every year. Conversely, eating more food from plants – such as fruit, vegetables and wholegrain starchy foods – can help people reduce, avoid or even reverse these conditions, not only improving people's likelihood of a long and healthy life, but also reducing the growing costs to the NHS of these avoidable illnesses.

Intensively reared animals and birds have also been found to have reduced nutritional value – one study showed that meat from free-range chickens that could run around, keep healthy and eat varied food contained higher levels of healthy fats than meat from hens raised in cages, and who got little exercise and ate a restricted diet.

For the environment and natural resources: The impact of animal and poultry production on the environment is huge – not only in terms of high use of resources such as land, water, soil and habitats. It is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, in particular methane – cows belching and farting are said to account for 16% (about one sixth) of the world's methane emissions[2]. Nitrate run-off from manure pollutes water and damages wildlife in lakes and rivers.

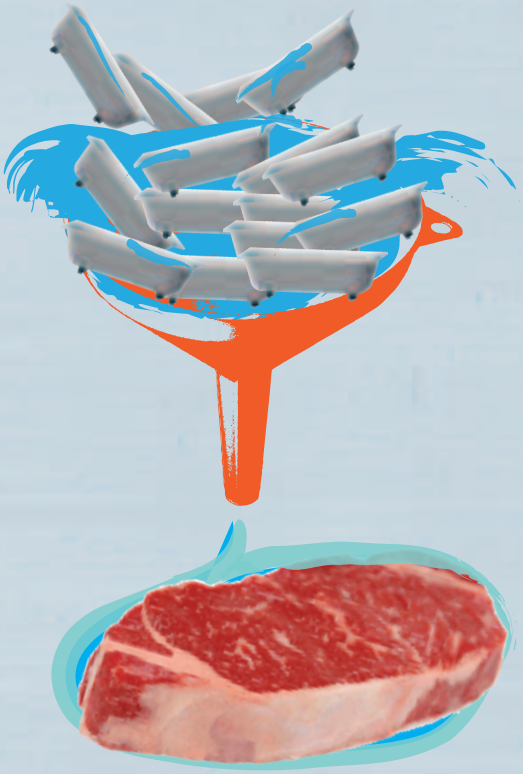


70% of all agricultural land is used for rearing farmed animals[10].

Grass-fed cattle is known to bring better quality meat, but this premium does come at a price. Are consumers ready to trade quantity for quality?

photo: flickr@NaturalEngland

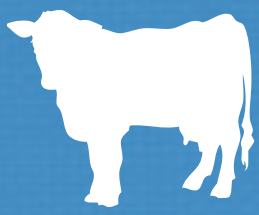
It takes **15,500** litres of water to produce a kilo of grain-fed beef, that's **20 bathtubs** of water for just one steak[8].



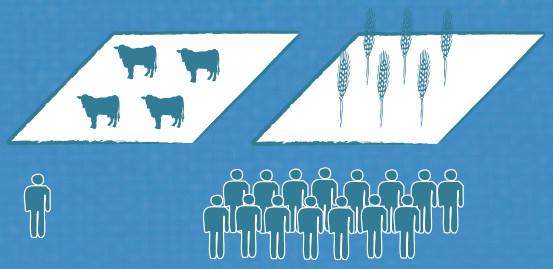
For animal welfare: The growing demand for meat has resulted in the mass production and commodification of animals for food production, with farmers pursuing the 'cheaper, faster, bigger' mantra. Animals are kept in conditions that deny natural behaviours and the basic freedom to roam and consume a natural diet. In the US, cattle are more often than not fattened in gigantic, overcrowded feedlots and routinely fed growth-promoting hormones.

In the UK, thanks to public pressure, standards are often higher than elsewhere in the world – restrictive sow stalls for pigs have been banned since 1999 and EU countries must now follow suit by 2013. Across Europe, the use of the smallest cages for hens has now been banned – although many of the eggs and much of the chicken meat that is imported from further afield and used in the processed food we eat continues to come from hens raised in cramped conditions.

DID YOU KNOW?



18%
of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to livestock[4]



One acre of land producing beef feeds 15 times fewer people than land that is used for cereal production[7]

Why is reducing meat and dairy consumption so political?

With a growing population, set to reach ten billion by 2100, and demand for meat in countries such as China on a steep upward trajectory, reducing the impact of animal and poultry production is an enormous challenge.

To be able to afford to eat meat is an aspiration in many cultures and a sign of success, so the message that consumption of meat and dairy on such a vast scale is now a problem may not be welcome, particularly when promoted by westerners who have enjoyed consuming them without thought for centuries.

People may feel (sometimes very strongly) that they should be free to choose what they want to eat. They may be strongly resistant to change, and even to the arguments in favour of change, seeing these as a threat to their freedom.

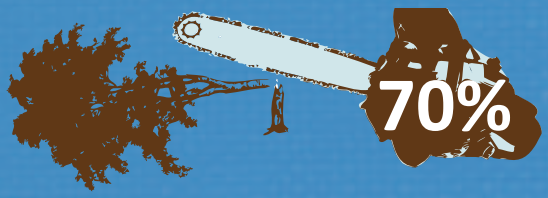
The moderate message 'eat less meat' is often portrayed in the media, or understood by meat-eaters as a dictat to 'become a vegetarian' or 'become a vegan', which may not be immediately attractive.

There is a strong worldwide lobby from the livestock industry against any efforts to reduce consumption of meat and dairy, which they see as threatening their profits.

While shifting to a more vegetarian diet is helpful, eating more cheese and milk as a result can also be problematic for health and the environment, as can opting for soya substitutes. Veganism is sometimes promoted as the sustainable solution, but not many people choose to change their diets in this way.

'Locally produced' meat may seem like a good option, and is often popular – but its locality does not automatically mean it is sustainable. It may have eaten feed such as soya produced on deforested land and shipped thousands of miles. Some land is only good for grazing animals – for instance, upland areas that may not be suitable for cultivation – and grazing can help maintain biodiversity in conservation areas.

A meat-based diet can be seen as a luxury and an inefficient way of feeding a growing population. A powerful argument is that precious land and finite natural resources such as water and fertiliser should be used to grow food to feed people, rather than grow grain and beans to feed inefficiently to animals.



70% of Amazon deforestation has gone to land to raise cattle[5]

Non-meat eaters are 40% less likely to suffer from cancers than meat eaters[6]

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Less is more: reduce meat consumption and seek out high-quality, organic, sustainably produced meat from farms you know and where you can ask questions about how it has been produced. The cost may be higher, but by eating less you may even save money.
- Switch from a diet reliant on animal protein to one based on plant protein, such as grains, nuts and pulses.
- Choose grass-fed, extensively reared meat as a more sustainable meat option – research shows it can be more nutritious.
- Support campaigns such as 'meat-free Mondays', particularly in schools and hospitals, where good nutrition really matters
- Think about rearing your own meat or get together with friends, see *chapter 3 - section 8*

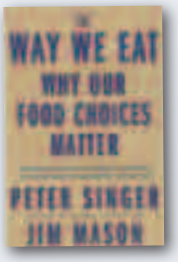
Where to go for more information:

Meat-free Monday: www.meatfreemondays.com
Compassion in World Farming: www.ciwf.org.uk
WWF Livewell 2020: www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigning/food_campaign/livewell_2020/

Books:

Eating Animals
Jonathan Safran Foer
(2011)

Meat: A Benign Extravagance
Simon Fairlie
(2010)



The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter
Peter Singer
(2006)

Movies:

Food inc (2008), Earthlings (2005), Fast Food Nation (2006), Super Size Me (2004), Forks Over Knives (2011) **See film review section**

POLITICS OF FOOD...

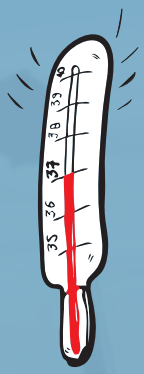
FOOD AND PEAK OIL

'The world of cheap oil is over,' the International Energy Agency reported in 2011[11], in recognition that increasing demand for oil, as well as a peak in production, sets the scene for increasingly expensive fuel and hence food now, and in the future. While the debate continues as to whether oil production has reached its peak and will no longer increase, there is a consensus on price. As demand continues to rise and supplies decrease, the availability of oil reduces year after year, making it increasingly more expensive. Detractors suggest that we will always be able to find more oil, exploiting unconventional oil fields such as tar sands and shale gas, with other sources continually being identified. Others argue that technological innovations will render our need for oil defunct long before it ever runs out, and before price rises unduly affect the global economy. But what if that's not the case?

So why does it matter?

Oil feeds millions of industrial processes, production lines and transport systems. Plastics, paints, clothes – almost everything we use is either made of or uses oil. Our current industrial food chain is said to be 'saturated in oil' – from the lorries and planes that transport it to the production of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides on which industrial agriculture is dependent. While there may be alternatives to plastics, for example, the potential scarcity of oil is likely to impact disproportionately on the food supply chain, making its replacement more complicated. Building sustainable local food systems means building food systems that are less dependent on oil and external inputs, thereby creating a more resilient and secure supply chain.

+2°C



In 2012, the IEA (International Energy Agency) suggested that ⅔ of the existing fossil fuel reserve should stay in the ground in order to avoid irreversible climate change effect and stay within the 2°C goal[12].

Reducing and even ending our reliance on oil in food production is a huge challenge. If we can't produce food without heavy machinery, such as planes spraying pesticides, how much will our food cost when oil becomes scarce?

A food system dripping in oil

Modern industrial farming methods are inextricably linked to fossil fuel. Tractors and machinery are the most obvious use of fossil fuel; they rely on oil to plough, spread farm chemicals and to harvest the crops. Looking at the whole life-cycle of food, farms account for only about a quarter of the energy used to feed us. As the food leaves the farm gate, the energy bill is just getting started. More fossil fuel is used to process, package and transport the food to our plates, which is why the availability and the price of oil has consequences beyond production, on the way to our dining table.

Food Production

Primary production: fuel for inputs such as pesticides and fertilisers, fuel for farm vehicles, fuel to heat greenhouses, fuel to work water pumps for irrigation. Secondary production: cleaning and preparing, processing, combining and cooking.

Distribution

Marketing, transporting, refrigeration and storing.

Packaging

Packaging, bottling, and marketing.

Consumption

Shopping, cooking, heating, food disposal.

Oil-dependent inputs

Food crops need a variety of elements to grow, in particular, nitrogen, phosphate and potassium. These can come from natural processes, but in high-yield industrial farming, these elements are manufactured and added in a way that requires a lot of energy, usually from oil and natural gas, and a lot of artificial fertiliser is made from natural gas. As oil and other fossil fuels such as natural gas become more expensive, fertiliser and other farm chemicals cost more to produce and therefore food costs more to produce.

By relying too much on farm chemicals for crop production, we have added stress and pressure to our food system and made it vulnerable to fuel price rises. We did so because fossil fuel has historically been such a cheap energy source. We could do much more to make farming less dependent on fossil fuels. However, the technological innovation required to research and develop renewable sources is neither particularly advanced, nor well funded.

Similar peaks

Similar peak production scenarios will eventually occur with other materials vital to the current food system, such as phosphate rock, which is intensively used in fertiliser production. The irony is that because of peak oil, bio-fuels have been promoted in order to absorb the growing demand for oil. Consequently, more crops – for fuel rather than food – are grown with artificial fertilisers and this puts even more pressure on fossil fuel and phosphate rock stocks.

Processing food is energy intensive. For example, breakfast cereal requires more than 7700kcal for 500grams, five times as much energy as contained in the cereal itself[13]...

Organic and low-input farming

Oil is energy and, like food, can be measured in calories. This is useful in order to visualise inefficiencies in food production. When the industrial agriculture system uses oil to make food, most of this energy is wasted in the process. Energy is spent through the application of fertilisers, heating, refrigeration and transportation. But food doesn't have to be produced this way. Growing food without fossil-fuel-based fertilisers is obviously possible and has been done for thousands of years, since the first agriculture methods were developed. In fact, all agriculture was 'organic' (even if not officially recognised as such) until the middle of the 20th century.

With developments in modern plant and soil biology, many argue that organic agriculture methods are realistic and sustainable ways forward. Around the world, organic has come to be recognised as a label identifying a set of high environmental and animal-welfare standards. Many environmentalists argue that we need to re-adopt farming methods that use fewer artificial inputs and are more self-sustaining by utilising cutting-edge technology and innovation in the future. This doesn't mean all farms will need to be 100% organic, rather that farms will need to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel, in order to keep food affordable. Adopting at least some organic practices will help to achieve this.

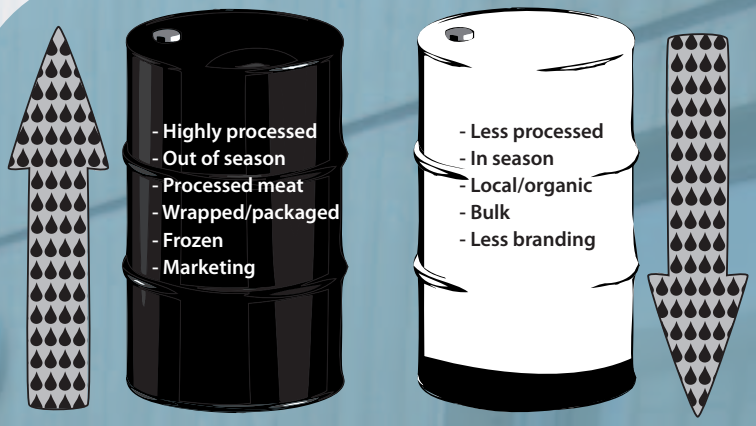
However, once out of the farm gate, the majority of the organic crops produced are as reliant on fossil fuel for transportation, processing and refrigeration as conventional produce. If shipped or flown around the globe, the environmental advantages of organic methods are greatly diminished. It's clear that it's not just how we grow our food, but the entire food chain that needs reform.

Distribution systems

Developments in transport, logistics and refrigeration technology have made it even easier and cheaper for consumers to get any food they like throughout the year, regardless of the season. Through imports and exports, the global food market maintains a constant supply, regardless of seasonality. Even if this constant importing and exporting makes some kind of economic sense (within the current global economic system), it is environmentally unsustainable, and potentially economically unsustainable as fuel prices rise.

For example, milk imports have doubled in the UK over the past 20 years, while milk exports have increased four-fold[14]. Educating consumers to shop and eat with seasonality in mind would ensure better prices for farmers and help reduce the huge carbon footprint associated with food transportation.

Lovely charts are available to keep the season in mind when shopping www.lizcookcharts.co.uk



The 'virtual' oil content of food is affected by different factors and methods of production, but we can buy food that uses less oil, such as local, fresh and seasonal food. We can also waste less food, because when food goes to waste, this also wastes all the oil and energy that went to produce it in the first place.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Eat with the seasons: strawberries, peaches and courgettes don't grow naturally during the winter in the UK. If they are on supermarket shelves, they are there because of fossil fuel: oil to heat glasshouses; artificial inputs to feed the plants; and oil turned into jet fuel to fly them around the globe.
- Get involved in local food projects as outlined in this handbook and help build local resilient food systems less reliant on oil.
- Grow your own: if you can, even a pot of herbs on the windowsill. Grow using organic methods that don't require inputs.
- Be aware when buying locally produced food that it still may have been produced in glasshouses using high levels of inputs – just because it's local doesn't guarantee sustainability.
- Avoid processed food: it's not only better for your health, but reduces fossil fuel use in the food that you eat.

Resources

ASPO: Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas http://www.peakoil.net/
The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience, Rob Hopkins (2008)
How Bad Are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything, Mike Berners-Lee (2010)

POLITICS OF FOOD...

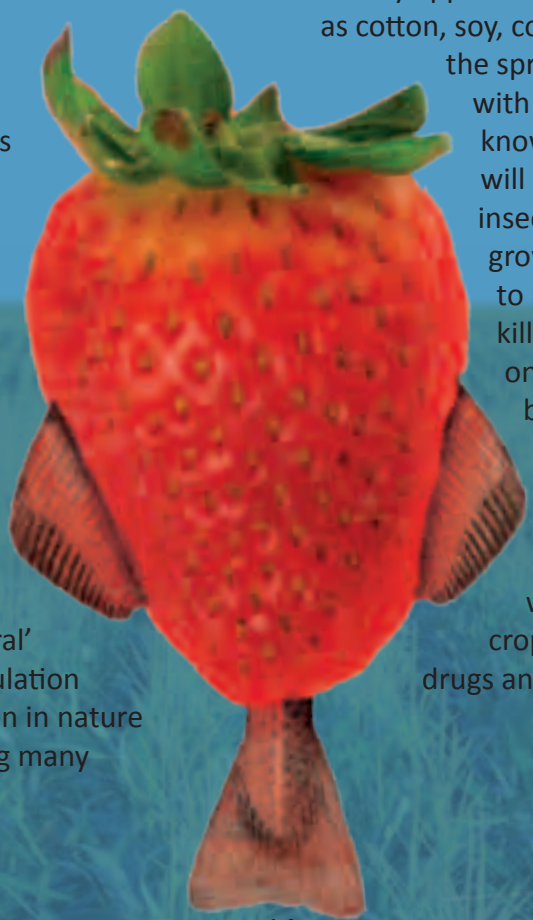
GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Every few months, the headlines bring up the same three letters, GMO – genetically modified organisms. Since 1986, when the first genetically modified corn was authorised for the market, the debate has been raging. Today, there are 148 million hectares of genetically modified (GM) crops in cultivation, approximately 10% (one tenth) of the planet's agricultural land area[14]. Multi-national agri-companies such as Monsanto and DuPont, who control the GM market, argue that their research helps develop better plants for tougher growing conditions, making life easier for farmers and securing food supply that is 'essential' to feed the world[15]. However, environmental groups and members of the public, particularly in the UK, are strongly opposed to the technology, arguing that it's too risky and too easily manipulated to be worthwhile, describing GMOs as an alternative no-one needs.

On first view, it might be difficult to understand why plant research would generate such anger from environmental groups, but this is not just any typical plant research. GM research is about rebuilding life. GM research is about reorganising genes in DNA, the information-carrier of life, in order to create new life forms for various purposes such as increasing yields or pesticide resistance. While the technology itself deserves respect, its application in the real world creates ethical and ecological issues that should not be overlooked.

A new technology

While farmers and plant breeders have been changing the characteristics of crops and plants for years through traditional cross-breeding techniques, GM technology takes the science into a whole new area. Advances in the understanding of DNA have allowed scientists to take genes with particular traits from one organism and insert them into another to recreate this particular characteristic in the new plant. So it is possible to take a gene from an animal and insert it into a plant. For example, a gene linked with the 'anti-freeze' like chemicals in an Arctic fish have been inserted into strawberries to make them frost-hardy[16]! It is this 'unnatural' crossing of species and manipulation of genes that would not happen in nature that concerns people, including many scientists.



The main current use of GMOs is to create herbicide-tolerant (HT) and pest-resistant (Bt) crops, attractive traits for farmers. These are mainly applied to major commodity crops such as cotton, soy, corn, oilseed rape, allowing the spraying of whole crops of fields with herbicide or pesticide in the knowledge that the valuable crop will not be damaged. In the US, insect-resistant crops are widely grown, which have been engineered to produce a bacterial toxin that kills the pests that normally feed on the crop. Other crops have been developed that ripen more slowly, or are more resistant to plant diseases. In the pipeline are developments in blight-resistant potatoes, anti-aphid wheat and 'pharming' using GM crops to produce pharmaceutical drugs and vaccines.

GMOs in a nutshell

There are mainly two kinds of GMOs, herbicide-tolerant (HT) and pest-resistant (Bt). These two traits have been mostly developed on major commodity crops such as cotton, soya and corn. Other plant species are developed, such as GM potatoes for paper, sugar beet, and even GM animals, such as GM mosquitoes aiming to prevent diseases. Because public opinion rejects the use of GMOs, particularly in Europe, most GMOs are only used as bio-fuel and animal feed. However, due to labelling loopholes, GM food does end up in human food, especially in North America.

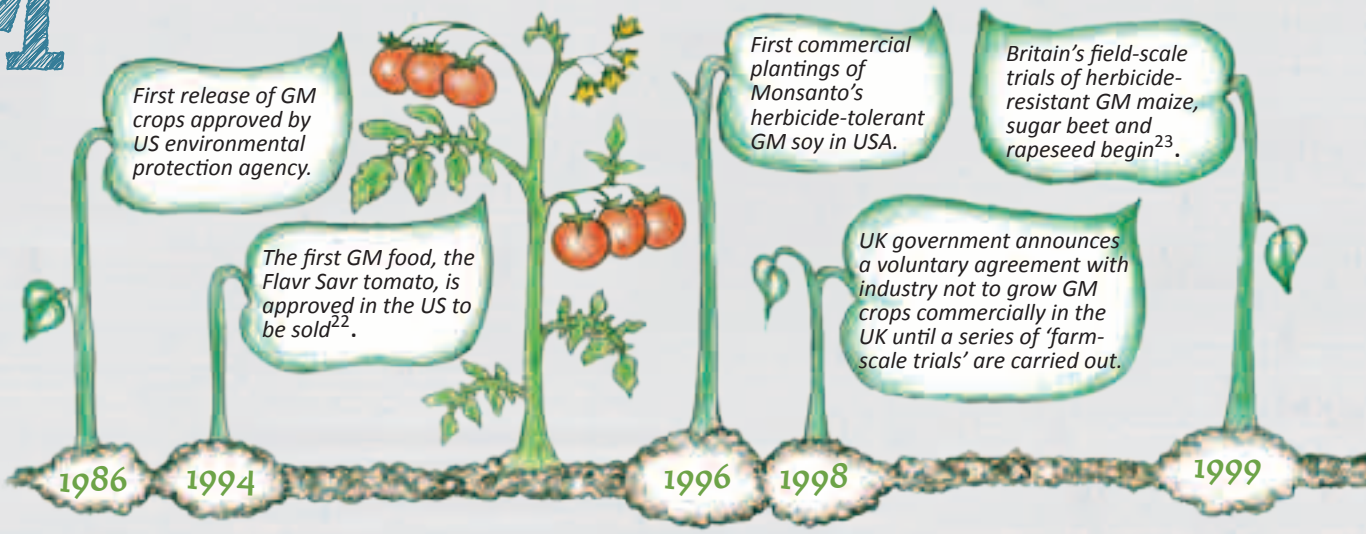
Am I eating GM foods?

Currently, no GM crops are grown in the UK other than in experimental conditions, largely due to public pressure. Also, very few foods are on sale in the UK, for similar reasons – supermarkets listened to customer concerns. Some products can be found, such as bacon-flavoured flakes for salad dressing, which are clearly labelled as made from GM food. However, GM is widely used in feed for animals and poultry, which is largely imported maize and soy from countries such as the US and Brazil, where GM in agriculture is prevalent and non-GM and GM crops are not separated. There is no requirement for produce from animals fed GM feed to be labelled, so this makes it impossible to make a choice not to eat these products, unless you choose organic[17]. And if you go on holiday in the US, yes, you will have eaten GM foods, as it is estimated over three-quarters (75%) of food in the States contains GMOs[18].

What is happening in the world?

GM crops are grown by more than 10 million farmers on 252 million acres in 22 countries. Spain is the biggest grower in Europe, but there are also significant quantities of crops grown in Germany, the Czech Republic, Spain and Portugal. Around the world, the US, Argentina, Canada and Brazil plant the most.
In developing countries, where the scale of agriculture is smaller and doesn't rely as much on artificial inputs, the use of GM crops is tempting to combat many of the challenges faced, such as pest control, yield, ripening time and disease resistance. However, the majority of GM applications are intended for large-scale monoculture farming (farming of single crops in vast fields) and not necessarily suited to the family farming found in Africa and Asia. In India, in a period of just ten years, use of pest resistant (Bt) cotton went from 6% to over four-fifths (85%) of total grown area[19].
There have also been particular concerns raised by developing countries, and by development charities, about the potential use of 'terminator genes' or 'suicide seeds' in GM crops. This is a piece of genetic code inserted into a GM seed that means the seed is sterile and will not create more seeds. The purpose is to protect the seed manufacturers' future profits, but it also raises the prospect of farmers not being able to continue the age-old practice of saving seed for next year's crops – particularly worrying for farmers from poor countries.

GM timeline 1986 - 2012

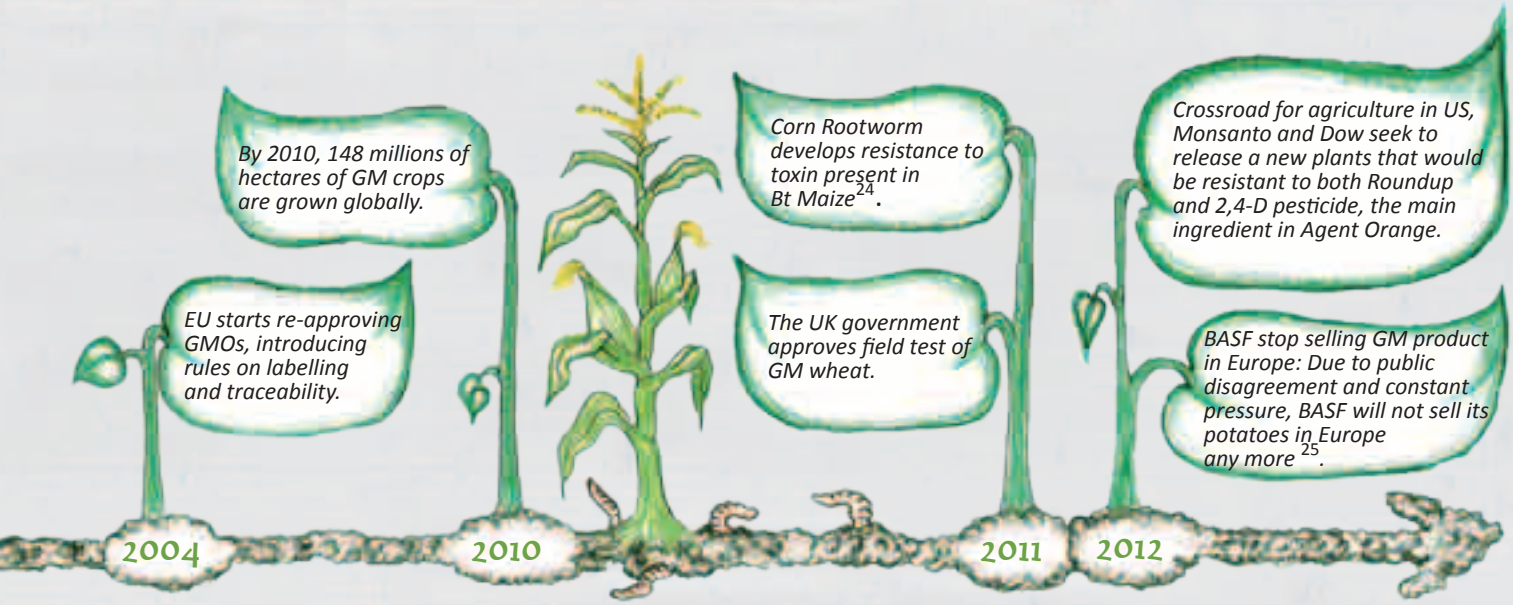


BURNING ISSUES

Cross pollination: Like other plants, GMOs produce pollen that travels around and can fertilise other plants (called 'cross pollination') – GM, non-GM, organic, biodynamic or otherwise. This can transfer some or all of the properties of the GM plant into a new generation of plants, with untested consequences for the people or wildlife who may eat that plant, and the environment in which the plant grows, including the bees that visit it to collect nectar. Because of this, GM cannot co-habit with other agriculture, be it conventional or organic, as there can't be any guarantee that the pollen of a GM plant won't contaminate another. Furthermore, GMOs are all patented (see box 'Patenting life'), so cross pollination allows patent owners to sue farmers for not paying them royalties, even if the GM contamination was inadvertent. This has already happened in the US. This issue is a real problem for farmers who see their livelihoods threatened by expensive lawsuits because they can't do anything to prevent cross pollination.

GM and hybrid, all the same? A hybrid plant variety is the result of crossing plants of the same species. Cross-breeding has been done for a long time in order to isolate and/or concentrate useful characteristics from certain plant varieties, for example, making a crop taller and stronger by selecting and crossing the best ones. This follows nature's own mechanisms and does not (unlike GM) seek to move genes between plants of different species, or between plants and other forms of life – with unknown and potentially significant consequences.

Patenting life: If you pick up an acorn in the woods and decide to plant it in your garden to grow an oak tree, you don't need anybody's permission, because no one invented them and nobody owns the acorn. However, if you were to do that with GM corn or soya beans, you might end up in a court room. Because GM companies technically create new life forms, they received the right to patent them like common inventions. In the long run, the danger is that only patented species will be available, increasing farm cost, reducing the diversity of crops and potentially resistance to pests. Ethically, patenting life is absurd, because it opens the doors for companies to own 'life' that can then be exploited and sold as private property. This puts farmers and their livelihoods firmly in the hands of multi-national GM companies.



Drawing: Vera Zakharov

WHAT CAN I DO?

Tips to avoid GM on your plate:

If you live in the European Union, almost no GMO food crops are grown commercially, so you have virtually no chance of eating a GMO if it comes from within the EU. The EU has a labelling system that forces manufacturers to display any GM ingredient. However, there may be GM ingredients in processed food either directly imported or made with imported food ingredients.

Meat and dairy are the trickiest because in the UK, nearly two-thirds (60%) of all maize and nearly one-third (30%) of all soya fed to cows and pigs is GM[25]. This doesn't mean that the animals or poultry that eat this feed have themselves had their genes modified, but that they have been fed on GM crops from overseas. (See "Where to buy non-GM fed" table at: www.gmfreeze.org/why-freeze/unwanted/where-buy-non-gm-fed/

- Avoid processed food from big GMO producers (USA, Canada, Brazil, China, Argentina).
- Organic is the only label that guarantees the absence of GMOs. Don't take labels at face value – 'sustainable soya', for example, has no legal definition.
- Look at the label – it should say if it contains GM ingredients in the ingredients list, with mentions such as 'made with genetically modified maize'.

Most caterers use oil for frying that may contain oil from GM crops such as soya. It is perfectly legal, but under the Genetically Modified Food (England) Regulations 2004, businesses using it should label their food as such or could face 6 months in jail and a £5,000 fine. You can talk about it with the restaurants where you eat out, or write to Trading Standards at your local authority and ask them what they are doing to uphold the law[26]. (http://www.croydon.gov.uk/business/support/food/fd/gmfood)gmfood)

Resources

www.genewatch.org, www.gmfreeze.org

Books: Brave New Seeds by Robert Ali Brac de la Perriere (2000)
The World According to Monsanto, by Marie-Monique Robin (2008)

Films: The Future of Foods by Deborah Koons (see the film review section for complete reference)

SEEDS AND BEES: WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

In the 1970s, UK and EU legislation introduced National Seed Lists to protect growers from the risk of buying unsound or unpredictable seeds. Unfortunately, this also unintentionally exacerbated the decline in traditional varieties of fruit and vegetables. The 'Lists' prescribe the varieties that can be legally bought and sold. This means that even if you have been growing a variety for years, if it is not 'Listed' it is illegal to buy or sell it. There is a fee to have a variety included in the List, and every 'Listed' variety must have a 'Maintainer', who pays to keep it on the List. This legislation was introduced to protect the quality of seeds, but the consequences are that now the only seeds listed are those that are good for commercial growing, so diversity, taste and local growing conditions do not come into it. Seeds not 'Listed' are often referred to as 'outlawed' varieties, or the more polite term 'heritage' or 'heirloom'. By introducing the National Seed Lists and therefore making trade in uncertified seeds illegal, governments are indirectly supporting commercial seeds against traditional seed-exchange systems.

In the developed world, this means diminishing agricultural diversity and a lack of choice for growers. But in the developing world, these restrictions are undermining food sovereignty (the ability of communities to feed themselves and have control over their food and where it comes from) and centuries-old farming practices of growing and saving seed for the following year's harvest, affecting livelihoods, independence and the ability to grow crops that are locally adapted.

Biodiversity

Seeds are one of the fundamentals of life, and lie at the base of the human food chain. By pollinating freely and making seed, plants constantly experiment with the genetic material available to them and adapt opportunistically to new conditions. As the reservoir of genetic material shrinks – because fewer varieties are grown – the potential for plants (and the growers who use them) to make successful new adaptations in the future is jeopardised.

In Vietnam, farmers make up 60% of the population. Seed saving has been done for generations and Vietnamese farmers have developed knowledge and farming methods to protect indigenous seeds.

Photo: archer10@Flickr

DID YOU KNOW?

Bees and other insects help pollinate over **75%** of our plants, which in turn are vital to other insects, birds and animals.

Without bees it would cost UK farmers **£1,8 BILLION** a year to pollinate our crops.

A double whammy

Our high-tech ultra-controlled globalised food system has created a monoculture landscape – growing fewer and fewer varieties of seed. This not only increases our susceptibility to crop failure and diminished food supplies, but also threatens the very survival of the humble bee, which our food system is still dependent on for pollination. Indeed, bees pollinate hundreds of plants and trees that produce our favourite foods. From almond trees to carrots and broccoli, farmers still need bees to pollinate crops.
Over the past five years, beekeepers and honey producers have witnessed 'Colony Collapse Disorders' (CCD), the unexpected disappearance of a bee colony. Due to the emergence of parasites, the extensive use of pesticide, loss of habitats and air pollution, the bee population has diminished by 30% every year since 2006. Human activities are largely responsible for this decline and it's our responsibility to take action to protect and secure the bee populations so valuable to our agriculture production.

F1 verses open pollinating

Another issue is the increasing number of seeds now on sale that are F1 hybrids, first developed in the 1920s. Growers traditionally collected seeds from 'open-pollinated' plants, meaning plants that pollinated naturally, where they grew. Hybrid seeds are produced by deliberately cross-pollinating two plants from different varieties that have often already been self-pollinated for several generations. By crossing plants in this controlled way, plant breeders can develop and enhance very specific characteristics, such as high yield, disease resistance, or short straw length to facilitate combine harvesting.
The seeds of these crosses, called F1 (or Filial 1) seeds, produce very uniform plants that are often very vigorous, but they do not 'breed true'. When F1 plants mature, the seeds they produce are either sterile or grow into weak plants with unpredictable traits. To replicate the F1 hybrid plants, the original cross must be repeated. So farmers and growers cannot collect these seeds and sow them again the following year, but instead have to buy new seed every year.

Hybrids?

Hybrids became a means to force farmers to buy new seed every year. Between 1930 and 1960, the whole of the US main crop – maize – was gradually converted to hybrid seed. While officially this was done to secure yield increase, in reality the main reason was the monopoly effect for the multi-national biotech industry.

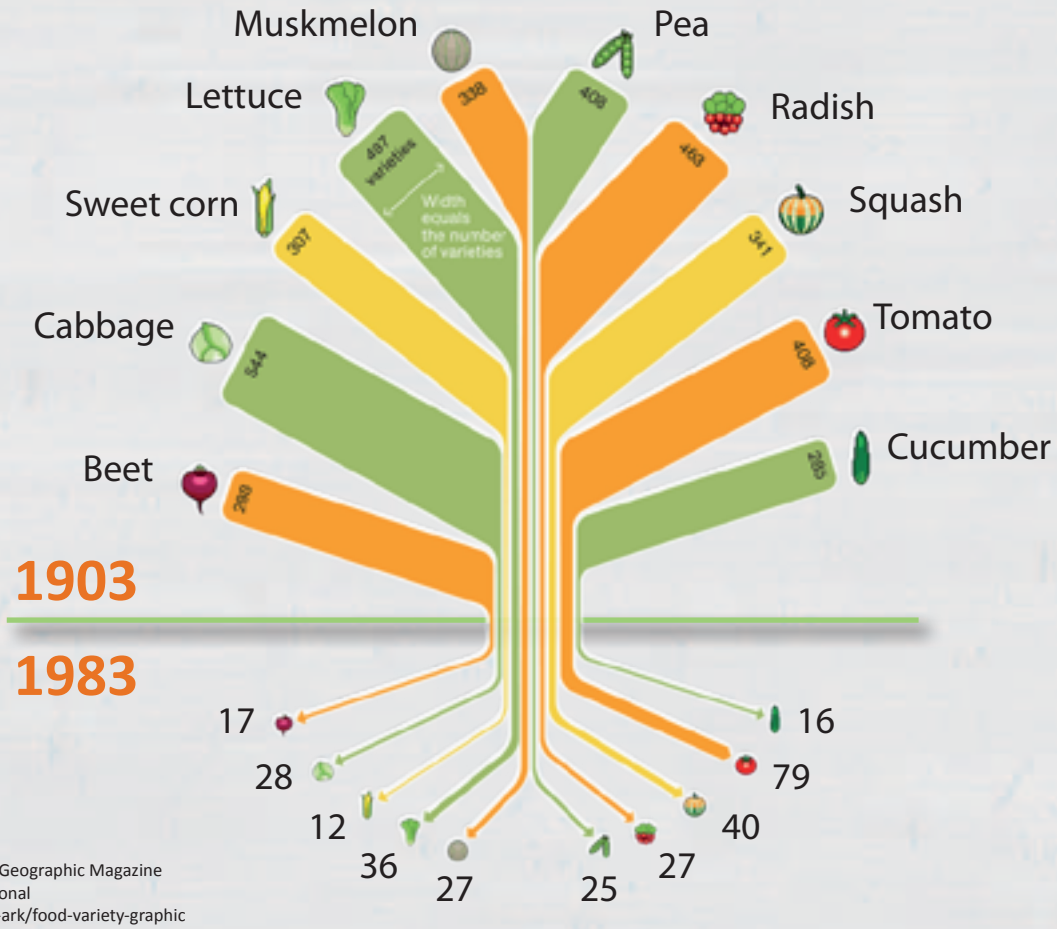
The Early Girl tomato has been a popular hybrid variety since the 1960s. Like many others, the patent now belongs to Monsanto.

Plant diversity

The United Nations estimates that three-quarters (75%) of plant diversity in agriculture has been lost in the past 100 years. In Mexico, four-fifths (80%) of maize varieties have been lost. In the Philippines, only two varieties of rice are now cultivated, where once there were thousands.

A century ago
In 1903, commercial seed houses offered hundreds of varieties, as shown in this sampling of ten crops.

80 years later
By 1983, few of those varieties were found in the National Seed Storage Laboratory (which changed its name in 2001 to the National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation)



Infographic designed by John Tomanio for National Geographic Magazine
data from Rural Advancement Foundation International
http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/07/food-ark/food-variety-graphic

And the good news?

In January 2012, Kokopelli, a French non-governmental organisation working since 1999 to protect seed biodiversity, secured a legal opinion from the EU Court of Justice stating that the most contentious parts of EU and French seed law violates the principle of proportionality, free enterprise, free movement of goods, and the principle of non-discrimination. Specifically, this ruling refers to the part of EU seed law that makes it illegal to trade or grow unregistered varieties, or to classify them as distinct, uniform and stable (DUS). In this opinion, these parts of EU seed law are illegal.

At the moment, these laws are probably the single most important barrier to biodiversity in farmers' fields and if this opinion brief is implemented in European and local laws, this will be a major victory in the name of agricultural biodiversity, and freedom for farmers and gardeners.

Kokopelli

GRAIN

PRACTICAL ACTION
Technology challenging poverty

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Find your nearest Community Seed Swap and trade your unwanted seeds for others that you do want.
- Try buying your seeds from independent seed producers, you can find a comprehensive list at this website: http://open-pollinated-seeds.org.uk/open-pollinated-seeds/Seed_Links.html
- Support organisations that are working to secure agricultural biodiversity such as Kokopelli, Practical Action, Grain and Genewatch.
- Support national bee campaigns by visiting Friends of the Earth Bee Cause website and the Cooperative Plan B.
- Buy local honey from local bee keepers.
- Go on a Bee Walk http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/action_guide_beewalk.pdf

References

The Quiet Revolution: Sowing the seeds of victory in the fight for biodiversity, Allan Jenkins, Guardian article 26 January 2012 Whose harvest? The politics of organic seed certification, GRAIN website, 3 January 2008

Websites:
www.kokopelli-semences.fr (multi-language)
www.practicalaction.org/seed_fairs_and_biodiversity
www.grain.org/article
www.seedysunday.org
www.genewatch.org

Film: Seeds of Freedom (see the film review section for complete reference)

Chapter Two
Practical Actions

Section 1: How to start a buying co-op
Section 2: How to start a CSA (community supported agriculture)
Section 3: How to swap and save seeds
Section 4: How to grow your neighbour's own
Section 5: How to start a cookery course
Section 6: How to keep animals collectively
Section 7: How to keep bees
Section 8: How to start a community shop

photo by Lisa Unsworth, Fork and Dig it

Introduction

Having read the previous chapter, you may well be feeling a little daunted or even overwhelmed by the sheer size of the global food system and its inherent problems. This chapter is here to help – change can and does start on our doorsteps. Knowledge is power – the more we know, the greater the opportunity to make more informed choices. Understanding why bees need a diverse ecosystem to survive helps us to act differently on a number of levels, from planting wild flowers in our garden to eating vegetables grown from seeds swapped at your local community seed swap, or even buying local honey. Being aware of the detrimental affects both environmentally and health-wise of high levels of meat consumption, or the potential consequences of GMOs in the food chain, enable us to prioritise the issues that are of most concern to us as individuals.

This chapter is all about practical steps you can take. You don't have to have any experience or expertise – just enthusiasm and curiosity. It details a range of different projects, activities, practical tips and resources – all aimed at inspiring and supporting communities and individuals to take a first step towards making the global food system a more sustainable food system. You can't do everything, so choose an issue that really means something to you and start there – you never know where it will lead you.

Clay ovens are great for growing projects. It allows you to cook and share with volunteers.

Moulsecoomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project
www.seedybusiness.org

How to...
Set up a food buying co-op

Whenever you see vans outside restaurants and shops delivering food and drink in large quantities, it's a reminder that efficient businesses buy in bulk from wholesalers, instead of making lots of trips to small suppliers. Food businesses order in bulk because they sell a lot of food and drink, and it is more convenient and a lot cheaper.

If only householders could get their hands on those magic cards that allow you to order from wholesalers! In fact, using a wholesale catalogue is not restricted to pubs, supermarkets or convenience shops. Individuals can also buy better food for less money, especially organic food, fruit and vegetables. Getting your food directly from a wholesaler – particularly if you buy in bulk with friends or neighbours – will help keep your food bill down.

Where to start?

As in every community project, it's good to have a clear overview of what you want to achieve. While not being a business, your food co-op will still involve some administration, money, contacts and deliveries, so it's best to be organised from the outset. Wholesalers work all year round with businesses in a professional manner, so they will expect the same from you. If you intend, there's no reason why a wholesaler shouldn't give your project the same respect as a traditional business. However, they are used to handling large quantities and will require a minimum amount for every order, usually starting at around £100. Therefore, if you are intending to start small with a group of friends and you don't want to stock up for the year, you'll need to get a sufficient number of friends, colleagues or others to make up your food-buying co-op. You will also need to think about what types of things you want to buy (such as dried goods or fresh fruit and veg) and how often you want to order. These decisions will help with your choice of wholesaler.

Organising a food co-op is not complicated and community groups shouldn't be put off by the sound of it. After all, a food co-op starts as soon as a few people decide to combine their shopping list and start buying together. Whether it's a formal or an informal initiative, a food co-op is simply a buying group that benefits the community and/or its members, without private profit. It can be a small informal group, such as friends coming together, or a larger enterprise with a formal co-operative model structure that aims to sell to a wider membership. These issues will depend on the members and what you want from your co-op.

The Rochdale Pioneers

It all started with a group of people trading essential items such as flour and sugar. Soon after, they became known as the Rochdale Pioneers, setting up the first successful co-op. They adopted seven basic principles for their co-op, which are still used today throughout the world.

1. **Open membership**
2. **Democratic control (one man, one vote)**
3. **Distribution of surplus in proportion to trade**
4. **Payment of limited interest on capital**
5. **Political and religious neutrality**
6. **Cash trading**
7. **Promotion of education**

Before doing your needs assessment, you might want to answer these questions:

Who will be the members?
Group of friends, students, local people

What do I want to provide?
Fruits, veg, dairy products, meat, whole foods, processed goods

Where will you be storing / selling?
In someone's house, city hall, church, community centre

Needs assessment

Setting up a small food-buying co-op is quite straightforward, but because almost every one of them is different, it's difficult to give a general recipe. The size, the location and eventual type of outlet will vary, but the planning process is here to match your project to the needs of the people involved. A 'needs assessment' just does that. It is clear that the size of your project will shape that process. No need to go through a lengthy market study if you are buying for just 10 people. However, if you aim to establish a fruit and vegetable buying co-op in the middle of a food desert (an area without a nearby food shop), you'll need to get local statistics, do some food mapping and consult the community.

Benefits of a buying co-op

Organic & wholefoods at reduced prices
Organic food is not always available, nor at affordable prices. Whole foods like nuts and seeds, pulses, cereals and grains are the basis of a healthy and sustainable diet. Getting them at lower prices tends to increase their consumption and therefore the overall health of the members.

Fresh vegetables from local farms
Even with high-tech refrigeration systems, conventional vegetables travel long distances from farms to our kitchens. Fruit and vegetables can lose their precious nutritional content quickly. Reducing transport will improve your chances of nutritious food. Supporting a local farm also means supporting local jobs and local businesses that will trade with the farms.

Health benefits to the community
It is clear that cooking from scratch with fresh produce tends to improve health and well-being. Processed food and ready-to-eat meals are generally higher in saturated fat, sugar, sodium and cholesterol than meals prepared at home. And if you want to reduce unhealthy ingredients for you and your family, you are in more control.

Reduced ecological footprint
Using less transportation, less refrigeration, less packaging, fewer artificial inputs (e.g. fertilisers, pesticides) all contributes to decreasing the impact of food on the environment. Sourcing produce through a food-buying co-op and local farms will help you reduce your ecological footprint considerably.

Organic? To be or not to be?

Organic certification can be a burden for small farms. It can be expensive to achieve and time-consuming to manage. Many small farms aren't registered as organic, but still do a good job of producing fresh and healthy vegetables without using harmful agricultural chemicals. If there aren't any organic farmers in your area, buying your food from small but committed family farms could mean the best of both worlds for your co-op, getting excellent produce at a lower price.

Food co-ops toolkit

foodcoops.org
the home of food co-ops on the web

This is a fantastic toolkit produced by the charity Sustain, funded by the Big Lottery's Local Food Fund. All of the information is available free of charge on its website and as a standalone downloadable PDF document. This thorough toolkit goes into all the necessary details and provides a lot of great tools such as surveys, questionnaires, forms and sheets to make the whole process easier.
Download your electronic copy at www.foodcoops.org
foodcoops@sustainweb.org (020 7837 1228)

Local veg box scheme

Local food-trading schemes are going strong and are still the best way to get affordable local and/or organic produce, whether run on a national or a local basis. Veg box schemes with a national reach tend to have websites, customer services and convenient or automated ordering systems, but many people prefer to choose a local veg box run by the community, to buy great fruit and veg as well as creating multiple benefits for the community and the local economy. They also allow you to build up a more personal connection with the farmers and food producers. A truly local veg box scheme will reassure your co-op members that the money they spend is invested in the locality and minimises the environmental impact of the food they buy.

Wholesalers

- **Essential Trading – Bristol**: Delivers throughout most of the southern half of England and Wales. www.essential-trading.coop (0845 458 0201)
- **Green City – Glasgow**: Minimum order £150 (free delivery). Delivers in and around Scotland. www.greencity.co.uk (0141 554 7633)
- **Highland Wholefoods – Inverness**: Minimum order £100; £250 to benefit from discounts. Delivers to Highlands. **www.highlandwholefoods.co.uk (01463 712393)**
- **Infinity Foods – Brighton**: Main customer base is the southeast of England. www.infinityfoods.co.uk (01273 424060)
- **Lembas – Sheffield**: Minimum order £100+ for non-trade depending on distance from Sheffield. www.lembas.co.uk (0845 458 1585)
- **Rainbow Wholefoods – Norwich**: Minimum order is £200 for delivery and £50 for collection. Delivers across East Anglia and beyond. www.rainbowwholefoods.co.uk (01603 630484)
- **Suma co-operative – Halifax**: The largest vegetarian foods and ecoproducts wholesaler in the country. Delivers to whole of the UK. Minimum order: £250+ www.suma.coop (01422 313861)

CASE STUDY:

BRIGHTON UNIVERSITY FOOD CO-OP

University of Brighton FOODCO-OP

The food co-op at Brighton University started at the end of 2010 in order to provide local and seasonal food to students at affordable prices. We talked to Vera, one of the core members.

How is the co-op organised and run? There are about eleven core members divided across three campus (Moulsecoomb, Falmer and Grand Parade). All the core members are unpaid and we have around ten other volunteers who help out on a regular basis. We try to give a little extra food to volunteers who give their time and passion to the co-op.

How much money did you start with? We started by applying for a small grant, about £500, and we asked for a £3 membership from members to help to get started. We got another grant when we started supplying wholefoods.

How much time do you spend weekly to run the co-op? Not too much at all. Core members spend between two to four hours a week, and volunteers about one to two hours.

Where are the stalls? We were given areas in university buildings for free. We are lucky to have the support of the student union. The stalls take place every Friday at Moulsecoomb, every Thursday at Falmer and every Monday at Grand Parade. They function separately.

Do you sell organic or non-organic? When we started the co-op, we did a little survey at our stall and online, basically asking people what they would want from a co-op, what kind of produce they would like, what would be more important between local, seasonal, organic and affordable, and we also asked how much money they would be happy to pay for a box. It turned out they wanted local and seasonal first and foremost, followed by affordable and organic. That's how we decided on our priorities.

How did you choose your wholesaler? We tried to find a wholesaler who could fulfil our members, expectations. We chose to source from TJ Fruits, here in Brighton. Every week, we get sent a list of what's available and where it comes from, so we can let people know. We also get some items from Tastables.

How many customers do you have? With students and staff combined, on average, about 100 people are supplied. But it fluctuates. We have about 10 different grains, pulses and cereals on offer, all the basic rice varieties, lentils, barley, etc. In the future, we would like to sell canned foods, such as coconut milk for example.

Blog: Uobfoodcoop.wordpress.com (recipes, news) **Twitter:** @uobfoodcoop **Facebook.com/**uobfoodcoop

HOW TO...

START A CSA (community supported agriculture)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is an alternative way for farmers and communities to come together mutually to support each other. Early CSA projects were typically set up by farmers who were looking for a community of people to help the viability of the farm by buying shares of the harvest at the beginning of the growing season. However, as the CSA movement has grown, there is no one fixed way that they are organised, there is a multitude of models – whole farm CSAs, customer-supported box schemes, rent or adopt schemes, urban-food growing projects, community allotments, and buying and distribution projects. But all have at their heart a desire to bring people, what they eat and who grows what they eat, closer together for mutual benefit. Having said that, the most common produce for CSAs is vegetables, but they do also include eggs, poultry, bread, fruit, pork, lamb, beef and dairy produce – growing, selling and distribution.

Although no two CSAs are the same, it's helpful to categorise them in some way in order to get a sense of why and how they work, and what might work for you. Here's an example of some categories that might be helpful.

CSA categories

Farmer-led

This type of CSA will have been organised by the farmer (often to help with the financial security of the farm) to whom the members financially subscribe to the season's crop. For example, this might be a producer-run vegetable box scheme, often with activities that bring customers to the farm.

Farmer co-operative

This might be a farmer-led CSA where two or more farms co-operate to supply its members with a greater variety of produce. This model allows individual farms to specialise in the most appropriate farming for that holding. Larger farms may concentrate on field-scale production, e.g. potatoes, smaller farms on specialist crops, e.g. salads and leaves, and upland farms on rearing livestock.

Community / consumer-led

Consumers participate in or may even run the scheme, working closely with the farmer who produces what the community wants. Consumer involvement is variable, but a successful consumer-led CSA will inevitably require a core level of community support for jobs, such as crop planning, weeding days, harvesting, and administrative and distribution support.

Farmer-consumer co-operative / contract buying

As described above, farmers develop co-operative networks to access a variety of products, but there is greater commitment by the consumers. Consumers may co-own land and other resources with the participating farmers and work together to produce and distribute food.

Distribution schemes / food hubs

These might be jointly owned by producers and consumer members, where produce is bought, sold and distributed through online facilities.

Why might you want to start a CSA?

- Starting a CSA is not something you would undertake lightly, but if you do, there are many benefits, including:
- You will have access to fresher food – with many schemes, the vegetables are picked, packed and delivered on the same day.
- You will know where your food is coming from and be able to talk to the farmer / producer.
- You will meet new people and will be supporting your local food economy, and you may well gain new skills.

... or get involved with an existing one?

- Setting up and running a CSA of any kind is a long-term commitment both emotionally and physically. Initially, it might be easier to get involved in an existing scheme to see whether it's for you or not.
- There is risk involved – committing to sharing the harvest can mean little or no produce if it's a bad growing year.
- Patience – waiting for the root vegetables to end and the leaves to start can test your patience and boredom threshold, but it's usually worth the wait.

Where to start

There are many things you will have to consider. However, there are four essential elements to start with. You will need:

1. A motivated group or individual who has the time, energy and determination to turn an idea into a reality.
2. A producer or group of producers willing to share responsibilities and choice with the group.
3. A group of informed consumers who see the bigger picture and are prepared to shoulder ups and downs in the early stages of the CSA's development.
4. Accessible land.

Find your nearest CSA at
www.soilassociation.org/inyourarea

There are many resources available to help you get started (see the links at the end of this section) but the most helpful thing you can do, and do it first, is to talk to existing CSAs, old ones and new ones (find your nearest CSA at www.soilassociation.org/inyourarea). They will give advice and guidance and a reality check on what's involved: the work, the commitment, the problems, the money or lack of, and why it's all worth it.

CSAs rely on hand labour more than any other agriculture model, but they provide volunteering opportunities, holding communities together.

CASE STUDIES

A food hub: StroudCo

StroudCo is a local food hub in its early stages of development. It is a Community Interest Company without shareholding, and is jointly owned by producers and consumer members, which encourages dialogue and the resolution of differing interests for mutual long-term benefit.

www.stroudco.org.uk

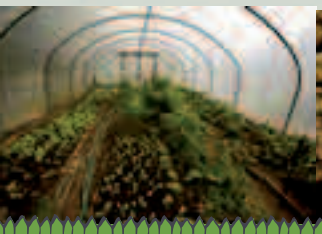
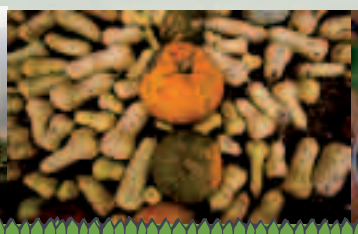
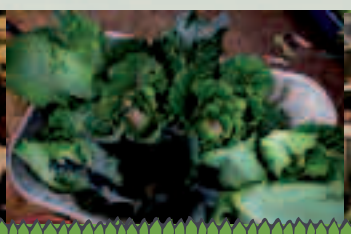
A school hall is used for delivery, collation and collection of the orders, which takes place on alternate Saturdays. The enterprise trades about 100 products, including fruit and vegetables, dairy produce, meat, beer, wine, preserves, bread and cakes. Produce is ordered online. Producers enter their stocklists onto the system and occasional traders (such as someone who has a plum tree in their garden) are welcome. Consumers order and pay in advance online, and can only pay if their account is in credit. Payment can be made online, in cash through the school, by cheque or credit union. Producers then receive a single collated order in advance and deliver to the school hall on a Saturday morning. A worker and volunteers sort the orders into boxes for collection in the afternoon. Overall management and direction is controlled by a board directly elected from the members to comprise 50% producer members and 50% consumer members. Consumer members are required to do at least two hours' unpaid labour per year, which can include help with sorting orders, leafleting, taking minutes or cleaning the hall. A social event is organised monthly, by one of the producers, each of whom are expected to organise something annually. Consumer members pay £2 per month and producers pay 8% of their annual gross sales through StroudCo. Grants amounting to about £12,000 (Rural Enterprise Gateway and Awards for All Lottery) have helped with start-up costs and a further grant is being applied for to cover losses during the three years they estimate it will take to break even.

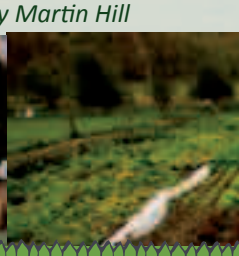
Community food project-led: Veg Share

In the first season, Fork and Dig It trialled a small-scale CSA – Veg Share – with funding for set-up costs from the Big Lottery. This scheme differs from other vegetable box schemes in that the content and the amounts in the weekly box vary with the season. When gluts happen, members will receive more produce and take the risk of less produce when crops fail. Members pay a set amount for a share or half share of the harvest for 6 months – so weekly payments are set, but the amount and type of produce will vary with the season. Full shares cost £15 and half shares are £8, including membership, and payment is in advance by monthly standing order. Healthy Start voucher bags (£3.10) are available to low-income families. Veg are picked up at various drop-off points around the city or at the site.

www.forkanddigit.co.uk

photos by Martin Hill



Farmer-led: Scarborough Shearling Partnership

A group of ten farmers running traditional flocks of Swaledale sheep on the North York Moors established this CSA, to enable people in the nearby town of Scarborough to have access to their meat. Membership of the scheme costs £2 per person and each member buys one or more shares, each share being equivalent to a shearling. Each month between October and May, a shearling is divided between the eight members. Over the course of eight months, each member will receive the full range of cuts of meat, receiving approximately 5lb/2.5kg each month. On a designated day each month, members can collect their meat conveniently butchered and vacuum packed from a central location in Scarborough. Members are also invited to a farm visit and a 'Shearling Supper'. One share consists of a whole shearling (44lb/20kg of on-the-bone meat) delivered over 8 months at the costs of £150. This works out at an average of £7.50/kg. The meat can be paid for as a one off payment or by a monthly standing order of £18.75.

Community/consumer-led: Exeter Community Agriculture

This scheme arose from the coming together of a local farmer/grower interested in community food links and a small group of Transition Exeter members inspired by other CSAs. It was established in September 2008 and currently has 40 members. The CSA grows vegetables on four acres of land rented from an organic farmer (arable/horticultural farm). It is an Industrial Provident Society (IPS) Co-op with a committee of management. Quarterly membership meetings are held, with overall decision making by consensus of the full membership. Day-to-day management decisions are delegated to the growers group (7 members), which report to the management group for the adoption of plans. There are currently no employed staff members. The farm they rent land from provides contract tractor work for cultivation, but all other work is carried out by ECA members who participate according to their interest and skill. Tools have been donated/found/purchased second-hand and facilities are limited.

Links

A user-friendly guide to starting your CSA scheme – **The Soil Association CSA Manual and Appendices**
http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/resources/essentialreading

Films to inspire – **Camel Community Supported Agriculture**: www.camel-csa.org.uk/videos
This book is the introductory guide to **Community Supported Baking**
http://www.sustainweb.org/realbread/knead_to_know

Where to look for **potential funding**:
http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/sourcesofhelp/fundingopportunities

How to...
Swap & Save Seed

What is a community seed swap?

A community seed swap is a social event where people get together to swap seeds, learn about seed saving and to share experiences. It can be as small or as big as you see fit. It might be a few allotment buddies working collectively to save a variety of seeds over a season and then coming together to swap varieties, or a group of activists keen to highlight the importance of seed swapping as a means of protecting local biodiversity. Over the past decade, community seed swaps across the UK have mushroomed. They offer communities a very practical way to take positive action to protect biodiversity and to protest against the increasing control of the seed supply by a handful of large companies. Saving and swapping seeds sounds like a small thing to do to combat this huge problem, but it is vitally important.

Photo: Seedy Sunday Brighton

How seed swaps work, the practicalities

Community seed swaps are happening all over the UK, Europe and the world. Whatever your reasons for running a successful community seed swap, you will need:

1. Energetic volunteers to organise
2. Seeds to swap
3. A venue – from an allotment to a town hall or anything in between
4. Publicity to let people know it's happening

Seed saving – where to start:

Seed saving is easy; people have done it for thousands of years, in the process breeding all of the wonderful vegetables that we eat today. Only in the past century has it been taken over by professionals. With a little care, you and all your neighbours can grow better seed than you could ever buy; ideal for your own conditions, with better germination, and growing stronger, healthier plants.

The Secret of Saving Great Seed

You want healthy seed that is true-to-type and keeps well. For any one vegetable, you need to ask yourself these questions:

Crossing

- Will these plants cross with any others?
- Is this a good thing, or a bad thing? (Usually bad)
- How does this happen? (Wind? Insects?)
- What can I do to control this? Do I need to do anything?

Population

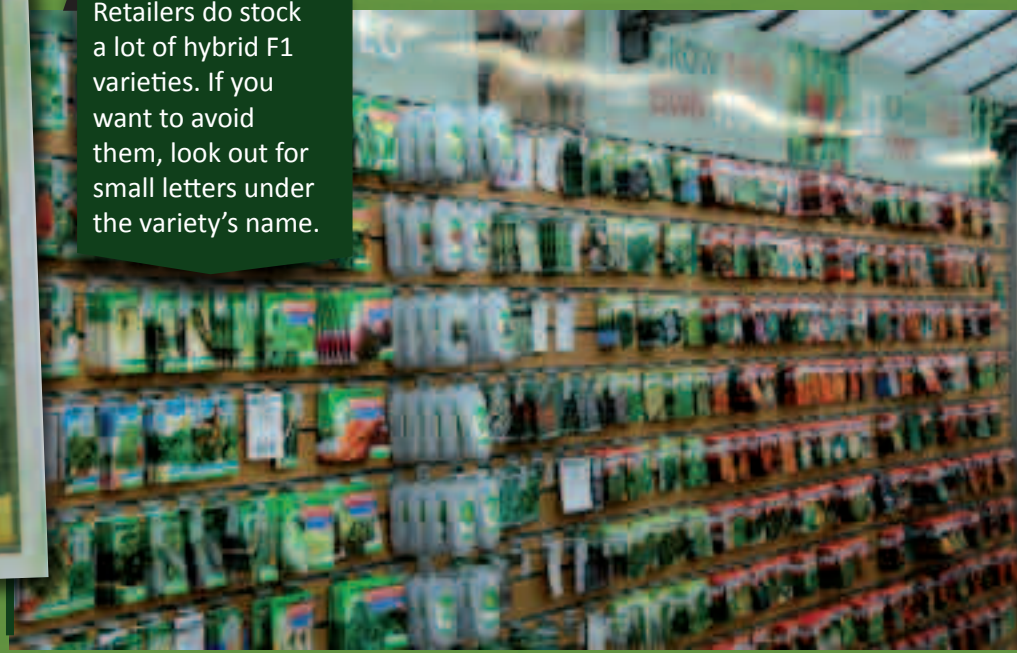
- Do I need a minimum number to get healthy seed? (e.g. do they breed as group?)
- Or do the plants live on their own and self-pollinate? (So I can save seed from just one?)
- Have I chosen the best plants for seed?

Seed extraction and drying

- Do I need to do anything special to the seed?
- Is my seed well dried and well labelled?

The answers are different for each vegetable, so look in the appropriate section at *http://www.realseeds.co.uk/seedsavinginfo.html* and you'll know what to do. It's all pretty easy, but you do need to look it up in each case.

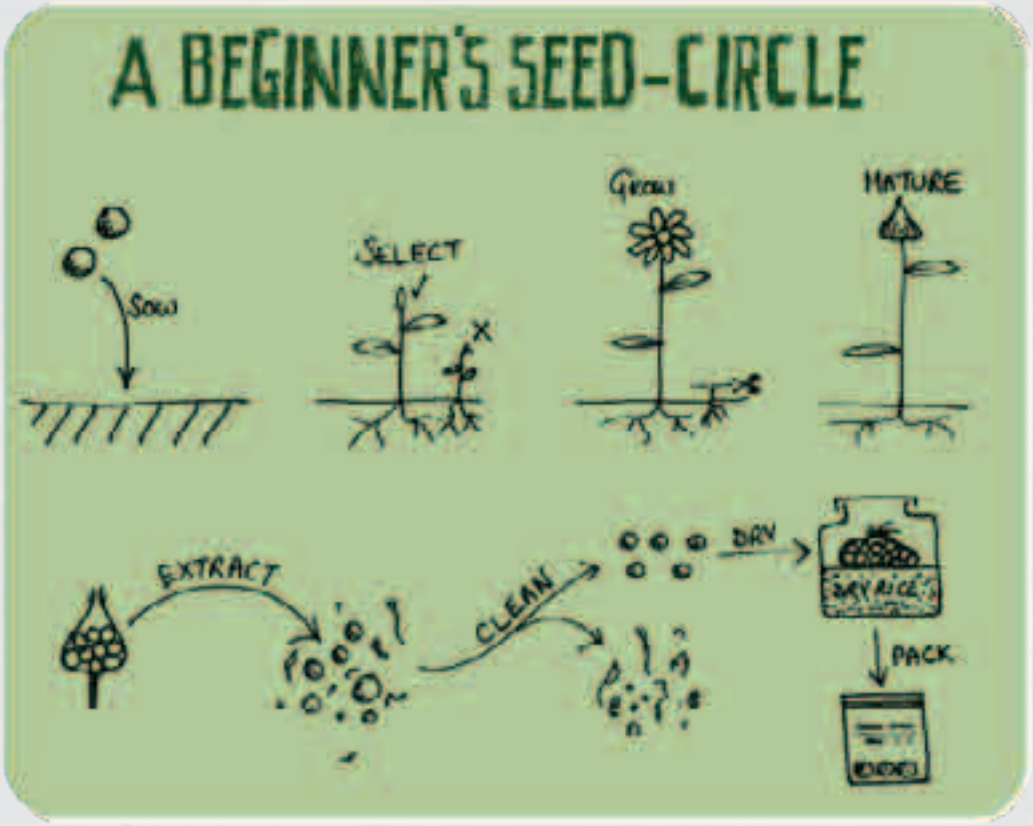
References: *'Back Garden Seed Saving' by Sue Stickland (ISBN 1899233091) is an excellent reference with a good introduction to seed saving, plus details about each individual crop.*



Retailers do stock a lot of hybrid F1 varieties. If you want to avoid them, look out for small letters under the variety's name.

How to make it easier: Why not start a seed circle?

Seed Circle is a simple idea: You get together a group of friends or neighbouring allotment holders, and each of you signs up to save the seed of one sort of vegetable. You'll each get lots of seed when you save your own (far more than one person can use), so at the end of the year you can all swap with each other. It's a great way to start seed saving – you'll all get several types of good seed for free, but each person only has to learn how to grow one sort. And you can help each other learn as you go. By making it easy, and doing it as a group, people will be less inclined to drop out and you're more likely to get good seed at the end.



The information about how to save seeds and Seed Circles in this section is courtesy of the Real Seed Collections Ltd (www.realseeds.co.uk), under a Creative Commons licence.

SEEDY SUNDAY, BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Seedy Sunday, Brighton and Hove

Where can you find a Whippersnapper, a Lazy Housewife, a Fat Lazy Blonde and a Drunken Woman all in the same room? If you suggested a brothel, you're wrong. In fact, they are all traditional varieties of garden vegetables (the first a tomato, the second a climbing bean, the last two lettuces), and they and many others might well be found at Seedy Sunday, the country's longest-running community seed swap that takes place every year on the first Sunday in February in Brighton and Hove.

Seedy Sunday has been taking place every year since 2002 and has over the years expanded (with more than 1,200 people attending each year) to include talks, stalls, demonstrations and films on saving and growing seed, as well as on wider issues such as local food and biodiversity. But the stars of the show are still the seeds – thousands of them, in little brown envelopes, with the names (or sometimes just a description – 'Lovely little yellow tomato, don't know the name') written on the outside.

These seeds are provided by the people who have grown them. Seedy Sunday volunteers and other gardeners donate saved seeds, which are bagged up before the event. Many of the old varieties available at the Seedy Sunday are not listed on the National Seed List, so it is against the law to buy and sell them, but perfectly legal to grow them. Consequently, the seeds are not for sale. There is an entry charge at the door and visitors are asked either to swap seed packets or to make a donation of 50p per packet to cover the costs of organising the swap.

The event is run by a small group of dedicated volunteers and is financially self-sustaining. You will find all the details you need to start your own community seed-swap event, plus details of other seed swaps around the country, on the Seedy Sunday website: www.seedysunday.org

HOW TO...

GROW YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S OWN

Introduction

Gardening and growing food is no longer a Sunday afternoon hobby, reserved for the few lucky enough to have a sunny back garden. It's a serious business! Sharing gardens between owners who can't or don't want to grow, and enthusiastic growers without space, is a solution for those who want to produce fresh tasty vegetables, more cheaply. There is a real and growing demand for fresh, local, organic vegetables, but it's not always cheap. In cities and large urban areas, where nine out of ten of British people live, green spaces to grow are scarce. And as for allotment sites, the waiting lists are often long and sometimes endless. Access to land to grow on can be a real problem. One solution is to grow on that patch next door – your neighbour's.

The origin

It all started from a different outlook. Charities and organisations working with isolated elderly people would organise visits from younger people to help look after the elderly person's garden, when it was becoming too difficult for them manage. They wouldn't have to worry about their garden becoming overgrown; they would get company, possibly be able give gardening advice and sometimes even get fresh veg or flowers in return. The need for tasty vegetables and the lack of space to grow them have pushed local groups to develop sharing schemes between garden owners and landless growers. More than getting vegetables, these schemes bring people together – building friendships, sharing knowledge and affording the unique satisfaction of growing your own food from start to finish.

Raised beds have a number of advantages. Done properly, they help reduce weeds, keep moisture, and can even extend the growing season.

Starting a garden-sharing scheme in your local area

The success of garden-sharing schemes is largely due to existing community groups and the presence of a strong food-growing culture. The size of the city is important, as it informs the way schemes work. Successful schemes such as Grow Your Neighbour's Own in Brighton or Edinburgh's Garden Share Scheme work quite differently. For large cities, a more formal approach is necessary, with more legal requirements, often with the involvement of a council department or voluntary sector organisation to support the scheme. In smaller cities and urban areas, a volunteer group would be able to cope with organising and managing up to a hundred contacts.

Organising a garden-sharing scheme is easier around a pre-existing community group, as it will be far simpler to reach people through an organisation they already know. However, if no local food-growing culture exists in your area, the best way to get people together and growing is to go back to the roots of the scheme. Age Concern or charities and other organisations working with vulnerable communities may welcome such initiatives.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR GARDEN AND GROWERS

There are some basic rules that it would be helpful to follow:

- avoid gardens with a limited amount of sun (e.g. north-facing or over shadowed)
- avoid gardens with no direct access (i.e. not going through the garden owner's house)
- ensure everyone has an up-to-date Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check

Sharing your garden with someone you don't know, or growing in somebody else's garden, can sound a bit surprising at first, and may cause some people to feel anxious. With existing garden-share schemes, there tends to be a dropout rate of between 30 and 40%, so it's absolutely crucial to start small and to be very clear with potential swappers about what's involved. Not everybody will have the skills or the time needed to suit a garden owner's expectations. Equally, a potential grower may have very different expectations, so phone conversations followed by face-to-face meetings will help adjust expectations and make for more successful garden-share matches.

Once set up, maintaining a contact database shouldn't require more than one person working part time if the scheme stays relatively small, say under 100 shared gardens. Indeed, once you've matched owners and growers, each match is more or less self-managed, although is important to get feedback to make sure your owners and growers are happy with the match.

Getting people on your scheme

The most important thing is to start small. Stay within your ward or local area, as it will be easier for you to reach people via promoting it in the local shops and library. This also ensures owners and growers will be geographically close to each other. Garden-sharing schemes appear to work best in urban areas, because that's where you get the most people who might be interested in growing without having any space to grow. Distance is an important factor. Most growers will be reluctant to travel too far, and rural areas are more likely to increase the average distance between land providers and growers. For this reason, garden-sharing schemes tends to work best in low to mid-density urban areas.

Promotion

It is easy to forget that not everybody has internet access at home, especially elderly people, who are a significant part of owners in garden-sharing schemes. Although promoting your scheme online is necessary, it shouldn't be your main way of communicating. Universally, passionate individuals are what make a great garden-sharing scheme. Try to get support from local people who are really passionate about growing and encourage them to be your local ambassadors. They will be able to promote your scheme in their area and perhaps give talks at the local horticultural society, local schools or other local events.

Funding

This part is slightly tricky because the main emphasis of garden-share schemes (sharing between individuals) probably won't fit many funders' criteria, which often focus on 'a benefit to the community'. Your scheme will obviously contribute to your local area, but this will be difficult to prove. From a funder's point of view, your scheme will be for private interest. However, you may be able to access funding to offer services, including workshops and training sessions for growers to learn basic gardening skills and expand their knowledge.

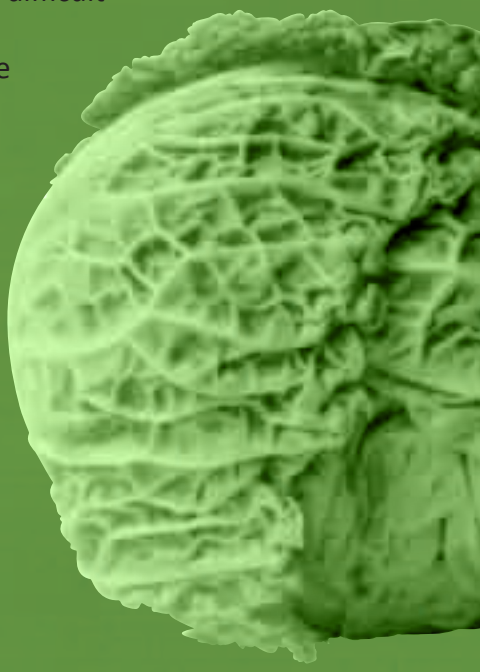
For more information, here is a list of the main current and successful schemes around the country, as well as interesting pages to visit:

http://communitygreenspace.org.uk/ **(Cornwall)**
http://www.edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk/ **(Edinburgh)**
http://www.growyourneighboursown.org.uk/ **(Brighton)**
http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/groups/food-group/gardenshare/ **(Totnes)**
http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/home/local-food-project/growing-trends/615-land-sharing-schemes
http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-share-vegetable-garden

HOW TO...

START A COOKERY COURSE

Accessing and eating healthy food should almost be a basic human right, but it's not always easy. It's hard to find affordable, healthy places to eat at and it can be difficult to find time to cook meals from scratch in a busy working life. And although cooking is becoming increasingly fashionable, especially on TV, a lot of people still find it difficult to do what they 'learn' through cookery programmes and magazines. That's because cooking is like cycling – you can't learn how to do it without actually getting on with it. Cookery classes and training sessions are like stabilisers for cycling. They help people build confidence and realise cooking is not actually as complicated as it sometimes appears and, with some planning, it is quite easy to fit in a busy schedule. Most cookery classes or courses aim to teach people about either affordable healthy cooking, world food or cooking from scratch. Whatever your reason for wanting to start a cookery course, there are a few things to know and think about before you begin your adventure as a cookery instructor. In this chapter, we'll go through all the questions you need to answer and what you need for your cookery project.



Planning your cookery course

If you haven't decided yet, you'll need to choose what type of group or activity you would like to start with. In addition, you will need to consider the number of participants, the age range and the skill level of the participants. Many of these decisions will be driven by the type and size of your venue. Most community kitchens or kitchens in community colleges won't have more than 10 workstations, so that will limit the size of the group and what you'll be able to cook. In addition, what is available at the venue and what equipment you will be able to use will also shape your course.

Next, you have to set some aims and objectives for the cookery activity. Setting objectives for yourself and the participants will help you get the most out of yourself and ensure participants know what they are signing up for. Once you've done that, you can start designing the course activities, session by session, separating the skills needed around different recipes/ menus, and increasing the difficulty as the course progresses and participant confidence increases. Generally speaking, it's helpful if recipes are easy to follow, but if you can get your participant to overcome some of their own personal challenges, they will really feel like they have learned something, giving them a confidence boost that will help make cooking part of their daily routine.

The practicalities of attending your course are important considerations. How easy will it be to access? Can you provide a crèche? Can you get funding to keep costs low? If you are aiming to attract a wide audience, late classes probably won't work and only dedicated participants will attend. However, that might be perfectly fine if you are aiming the course at confident cooks who want to learn more specialised skills.

Cookability, Brighton

Group agreements:

Group agreements are a very good idea. They will help to keep everybody safe; ensure everyone knows how to behave and what's expected of them; and outline what will happen if a participant breaks the agreement. It's a consultation with your group to discuss and determine what will keep things and people safe:

- Washing hands, hygiene
- Assault, politeness, respect
- Team work, clearing up
- Safety with knives and hot temperatures

Planning your recipes

In order to keep things as safe as possible, try to avoid high-risk foods such as meat, fish and possibly dairy, as they may create potential problems including maintaining cold temperatures. Indeed, your venue might not be able to store and keep ingredients cool, for example. These ingredients are not the cheapest either, so avoiding them will reduce your costs. Allergies are an obvious point of concern, so ingredients such as peanuts and sesame seeds might need to be avoided, but always make sure you have asked all your participants (or parents in the case of children's courses). When thinking about your recipes, you'll find that following seasonality is very inspiring and a great way to use fresh ingredients while keeping the cost low.

Training and legal requirements

Before training others, you'll need to get some training first. First aid is the basic requirement, but you'll also need basic food hygiene/safety and child protection if you plan to work with children. Risk-assessment training will help you to avoid incidents and keep everyone safe. Although you've taken all the precautions, accidents happen and you will need to plan your insurance and public liability.

Thinking of incidents raises the question of the need for an assistant. Cooking involves preparation of ingredients, setting up, sorting and cleaning of equipment. If you want to focus on teaching, an assistant will be very useful. If there's a little incident, an assistant will be able to take care of it, avoiding too many distractions.

Your first session

Bear in mind that your first session might not be the one where your participants have the most fun, but it's a very important one because you will set the context for the course, covering the course outline, the group agreement, how to use the equipment and working with others etc. Also, working in a kitchen for several hours with people who don't know each other and are perhaps nervous can could potentially create a few problems and disagreements, and although it will take up some of your cooking time, the group agreement will help with these issues.

Health and safety

Kitchens are places where health and safety is far from trivial. To prevent any slips, cuts, burns or even food poisoning, you'll need to indentify each type of potential hazard, the persons at risk, their likelihood and their severity. For each of these, make a list of existing control measures and check if they reduce the risk to acceptable levels. Write the risk-assessment information in a document table that you will sign and present to the people managing the venue or hosting the course.

There are some extra measures to take when working with knives and camping stoves, for example. Counting your items before and after your session will avoid any misuse outside your course.

CASE STUDY

COOKABILITY, BRIGHTON & HOVE

The Cookability course in Brighton was set up in 2004 by the Food Partnership in order to teach people how to create their own cookery class. So far, the course has been a great success and a lot of food and community projects have benefited from it. We talked to one of people who followed the course.

Caroline, Cookery Instructor, Valence Community Centre, Hove.

How did you arrive at the idea of teaching other people how to cook? Well, I have always been interested in cooking, and cooking for others. I did the course and it was some sort of epiphany. It's been really great to realise I could be helping other people by teaching them how to cook.

How did you transfer what you've learned to your own course? I think I got lucky because I haven't had any difficulties really. One of the usual issues is with funding, but as I already had some management skills, it's been ok, and I have managed to raise a good amount in the last few years. The key about starting your course, especially with funding, is to be pro active. You can't sit back and wait for the community centre to call you to run a course. But if you are passionate and like doing it, you have to get out there and the get the funding, it works!

Since you got on Cookability, can you tell us more about the project you have been running? Because it's challenging to keep work coming with only one project, I did several. All quite different from one another. Usually they would be a lunch club. We would start cooking in the morning for the meal to be ready by lunch time. The next cookery class I'll be running will be around dinner time, because we thought it would be nice for old people to have a nice dinner, a bit of a change.

What about your audience and cuisine style? Again, a bit of everything. Old people, children, we have been teaching healthy food, world cuisine, how to cook on a tight budget, etc. I think it's good to have a balance of healthy and fun recipes.

What's your fundraising process like? I do it free lance and don't get paid for that bit usually. You can't get funding as an individual, so I usually write it on behalf of an organisation. Small organisations don't usually have a fundraising person, so I'll do it for them and run the course in return. It's a good system, everybody's happy, the community centres are happy to get a cookery class.

What about legal requirements? Through the Cookability course, we did Food Safety and Hygiene level 1. They are mandatory and need to be updated every three years. You need public liability insurance as well.

Did you have any problems in your courses? I'd like to put an emphasis on group agreements, because they are very important. Once I didn't do one because it was mainly with people I knew and who knew each other from a previous course. One lady was picking on another, and it's quite difficult to see these little things while teaching. It became an issue and I had to let that person go from the course. So always do a group agreement. You also need to be quite diplomatic.

HOW TO...

KEEP ANIMALS COLLECTIVELY

Introduction

You want to know where your food comes from. You already grow some salads and tomatoes in your back garden or on a windowsill, or maybe you have an allotment. You have thought about keeping chickens or even pigs, but every time a list as long as your arm pops into your head telling you why you shouldn't or can't. But it doesn't have to be like that. Sharing the responsibility and the work eases the burden of keeping animals and is worth consideration. There are growing numbers of communities and neighbours getting together to keep pigs, chickens, bees, sheep even. They recognise the benefits of collective husbandry, sharing responsibility, accessing land and, perhaps most importantly, doing the chores!

The main issues are finding some land and some like-minded people who want to be able to eat food they have grown or reared themselves. Keeping animals doesn't have to be complicated, but it does involve being organised, prepared, being clear about what people want and can offer, and not forgetting to talk to each other.

Land / space

The first hurdle you may have to jump is where to keep your animals. They need space – pigs more than chickens (and people need space from bees) but you will need to be fairly close to make looking after the animals as convenient as possible. Some will have enough space in their back gardens, but most probably won't. Renting land from a local farmer, or talking to neighbours and friends might uncover someone with a big garden who would like to have home-raised pork or eggs, but doesn't want to do it alone. The allotment officer at your local council can advise on what you can and can't keep on an allotment.

Neighbours

Whether your neighbours want to get involved or not, you need to talk to them about your plans. Keeping animals, any animals, is going to affect them. You need them on your side. Equipping people with information and keeping communications open is the best policy. With those who want to get involved in the husbandry or bee keeping, you will need to discuss how it's going to work on a day-to-day basis, who will pay for what, how you will organise the chores – feeding, caring, cleaning, butchering etc. You will also need to decide who gets what – whether that's eggs, cuts of meat, or jars of honey.

Who looks after them?

Animals require daily care – although bees only need to be checked on periodically. Pigs and chickens will need feeding, watering, shutting-up for the night, while bees need swarming, honey collections etc. You will want to consider your group's daily and weekly routines, who's around when, how to accommodate holidays (ensuring not everyone goes away at the same time) and what skills you have in your group. You might want to set up a rota system, looking after the animals on a weekly or monthly basis. If the group is small, you may want to divide into on a 'morning and evening' rota. It's important to discuss these things collectively and be prepared to make changes.

Slaughter

By far the hardest part of keeping animals is what happens when they go from being animals to being meat – getting them to the abattoir. Most people who are new to keeping animals say the day they go off to the slaughterhouse, or when chickens need to be killed, is a turning point. If you can cope with the emotional trauma of seeing your animals go off to slaughter the first time (or actually do the deed yourself in the case of chickens), then you are more than likely to go on to keep more animals.

If the meat is for your own consumption (which, of course, it will be!) you can, if brave enough, kill the animal yourself. If not, have a licensed slaughterman come to you. Either way, you will need hot water (and vehicular access for the slaughterman), or you can take the animal/s to your nearest abattoir. (If you are having a pig killed and you want to make black pudding, you will need to deal with the blood promptly before it coagulates.)

Butcher or do it yourself?

The next question is, who's going to do the butchering? It might seem like a daunting task and the first few times it will be. However, there are many online and paper resources, courses and training (and others to talk to for advice) to help. Or if that's not your bag, there are myriad butchers who will do the job for a price (in the region of £20, depending on how you want your animal cut). Things to consider include how many people / families are sharing the meat? How often will you be getting the meat? What type and size of joints / cuts do you want?

What will it cost ?

A sample costing for 2 pigs from **Frome Cottagers Pigs 2008**

Total costs: £436.65

Estimated finished live weight:
170lb (12 stone)

Estimated dead weight at 65%:
110lb (8 stone)

Cost per lb – land rental excluded):
£1.98 (excl. heads)

Cost per lb – land rental included):
£3.12 (excl. heads)

The 'per lb / kilo' cost will go down after the first year due to the initial set-up costs being one-off capital costs. However, the cost of feed will almost certainly increase and, being the largest portion of the overall cost, will affect the final cost of the meat.

In addition, these costs **do** include the abattoir costs, **don't** include butchery costs, which are likely to be in the region of £20, depending on how you want your animal cut and whether you want your meat vacuum packed.

Photo: VickyTGAW@flickr

CASE STUDIES

Keeping pigs and other animals!

Dan lives in a terraced cottage in Frome with his partner and three children. They have a small front garden where they like to grow vegetables and flowers. They live among like-minded people, they chat over the fence and spend warm summer evenings in the garden. Several years ago, it turned out he and some of his neighbours (Magnus, Lisa and Sally) had a common interest in wanting to have more of their food on their doorstep. They decided to try keeping pigs – but where to start?

Close to their road, there's a piece of unkept land that everyone used to walk through and play on. Dan and his neighbour Magnus decided to see if they could rent the land and get themselves a couple of pigs. The land turned out to be owned by a local farmer, who agreed to lease the land to the two neighbours. The land was covered in brambles, nettles and other weeds, is on a slope and there are houses and workshops on two sides. They spent long days clearing the land and fencing it off with an electric fence, and finally installed their first two Oxford Sandy & Black piglets, which they bought from a local breeder for £50 each.

Quick tips - pigs

- Remember, piglets are small and cute, but then they grow up into big, strong, smelly pigs that will eventually need to be slaughtered.
- Do some training or a course (see list below for suggestions).
- Buy weaners in the summer and slaughter in winter.
- Obtain a parish holding number from DEFRA.
- Getting a slaughter-man to come to your home is far easier as you will need stock trailers to take them to the nearest abattoir.
- They need feeding twice a day, fresh water daily and you will get wet/muddy/smelly!

Abattoir and butchering

Dan and Magnus take the pigs to the nearest abattoir in a borrowed trailer using Dan's own car, which has a tow-bar. Slaughter is on Monday and they collect the carcasses anytime from Wednesday. Slaughter costs around £27 per pig, which includes splitting the carcass down the back.

Dan and Magnus do this entirely themselves on the kitchen table. They have now bought their own knives but in the first year the local butcher lent them his. They also buy sausage skins from the butcher. They had not butchered before, but found a video by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (A Pig in a Day) helpful, although they say you really can't go wrong with John Seymour (see resources section). It takes Dan about six hours to cut up a whole pig into joints and bag it ready for freezing. On day two, he minces some of the meat he's cubed and makes sausages. Dan says *"I'm rather rough and ready, while my neighbour, Magnus is more of a craftsman and makes lots of salami, parma (or what he calls Froma) ham, etc. I am too much interested in getting the meat out of the way before the kids get home from school. His kids are older and more interested (mine don't like pork – I wonder why)."*

Among the myriad benefits – tasty local meat, learning husbandry skills, getting to know your neighbours – after several years of keeping pigs on the land the soil was in great condition (ready fertilised and dug) and is now used in rotation to grow potatoes and onions.

Keeping hens

In the meantime, another neighbour, who had a somewhat larger garden than some of the other houses, had been keeping laying hens. However, she had found herself lacking the time to look after them properly. But still wanting to have fresh eggs on her doorstep, she approached Dan and her other neighbours to see if they wanted to join her in running her hens as a co-operative. They agreed. Now, four households take it in turn on a weekly basis to take care of the hens – this means letting them out in the mornings and shutting them back in at night, feeding, collecting eggs and taking general care. All members of the co-op can take as many eggs as they need. It seems to work very well, with little or no upset. Dan says, "It's usually me and my family that take more eggs than we should, so I tend to buy extra if we need them. It all seems to work rather well."

Each member (family) of the co-op buys feed or straw when needed, the finances are totted up periodically and differences paid to whoever is out of pocket. The system works very smoothly, with one exception – bank holidays almost always lead to an exodus, so there is often a last-minute scramble to work out who will cover for absent members. Luckily, other neighbours are usually happy to take on the hens for a couple of days in return for any eggs laid on their watch.

Quick tips – hens

- The choice of the breed is important. Depending what you want, it will influence the look of the hens, their eggs' colour and how many eggs they lay.
- If you want your hens to start producing soon, get Point of Lay (P.O.L.) hens.
- Chickens and hens will need very secure enclosures to protect them against foxes and other predators, particularly if they are being kept in urban gardens.

Keeping bees

The land area is substantial, so after a couple of years of practising with pigs, Dan and his partner Sally decided to try keeping a bee hive (going back to an earlier point about needing to identify what people can offer – Sally's family is well versed in keeping bees). Keeping bees is less about day-to-day chores and more about seasonal management, and having the skills, confidence and equipment to handle the bees.

See the Beekeeping section for details about natural beekeeping and traditional beekeeping.

Whatever next – sheep?

The grassland is larger than is needed for the pigs, vegetables, bees and poultry. So the neighbours have planted some fruit trees, which are enclosed and the area is also used for ducks and chickens. But that still leaves a large area that is seasonally overgrown with hogweed, nettles and Himalayan balsam. This is all good for bees and other insects, but they wanted to encourage some of the less competitive meadow flowers and to make use of the grass before the weeds grew too tall. Therefore, following a three month trial three years ago, when Magnus got three sheep, they got two more in April 2012. They are a large, hardy local breed which shed their own wool – so no need for shearing. They seem to be thriving (they are quite fat) with no additional feed. Fencing was the main expense and effort. Initial efforts were inadequate and the sheep would occasionally turn up in gardens, munching prized flowers.

In addition, there is a footpath through the field, so they had to put up signs for dog-walkers and install a stile. The sheep were 11 months old on delivery, cost £70 each and will be kept until late summer when they will go to slaughter. It was so wet in 2012, Dan and Magnus made a small hovel for shelter. It is just corrugated iron weighted down upon trestles by car tyres. They overnight there if it rains. Dan says, "*From memory, butchering a sheep is a piece of cake compared to a pig and takes about two hours. Sheep are also satisfying because lamb is so expensive, and because we have not fed them barley or other bought-in grains which pigs need for protein. They are fully grass-fed. Next year, we hope to buy a small flock of half a dozen lambs and sell meat to neighbours.*"

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- Getting out – pigs are strong and can run for a long way at a pace that humans cannot match, so it's important that they are properly secured.
- Smell – if you live in tight urban surroundings and are thinking about keeping pigs (or hens for that matter) you should remember that not everyone likes farmyard aromas! Talk to your neighbours first!
- Pests – keeping chickens or hens may bring other animals (such as rats) into your garden.
- Your beautiful garden – is no place to keep pigs, chickens or hens. They are all spectacularly good at turning any land, including lawns and flower beds, into areas that will be great for growing your vegetables.

Resources

Books:

H. Fearnley-Whittingstall, *The River Cottage Meat Book* (2004). The River Cottage Cookbook has details on animal rearing, including which hen varieties to buy, and how to slaughter and butcher.

Tony York, *Get Started In Pig Keeping: Teach Yourself'* (2010)

The Concise Guide to Self-Sufficiency by John Seymour (2007)

DVD: River Cottage - Pig In A Day With Hugh And Ray (2010)

Websites:
For a range of courses at Plumpton College (southeast) www.plumpton.ac.uk
Pig Paradise, one-day course on keeping pigs www.pigparadise.com
For all sorts of advice on getting and keeping hens, British Hen Welfare Trust www.bhwt.org.uk
For a list of abattoirs see www.tracingpaper.org.uk/foodtracer/abattoirs
Local smallholders' association – most counties have one as well as breed societies (for pigs or sheep)
Local branch of the National Beekeepers Association – do the basic competence exam.

HOW TO...

PLAN BEE – HOW TO KEEP BEES

In this section we present practical suggestions about how we can do our bit, by increasing biodiversity to attract bees and getting into natural beekeeping.

Wildlife boost

Bee populations are intrinsically linked with plant diversity. The more plant species there are, the more diverse the food is for bees and therefore the higher their chances are of sustaining a healthy population. Increasing the number of bees starts with the plants they depend on. Just as we put seeds and feeders out for birds, we need to plant a greater variety of flowers that attract bees. There's no need for complicated gardening skills here, a wild and disordered mix of plants will do the job just fine. Bees are attracted to some plants more than others, so it's a good idea to start with those first. Plant them on your balcony, in your garden, around your house, or anywhere with a bit of soil.

It's always good to take into account your local environment, as you might have some local plant varieties that will do better than others; however, these are universally good bee-friendly plants to start with:

- Sunflower *(Helianthus annuus)*
- Hollyhock *(Alcea setosa)*
- Wallflower *(Erysimum scoparium)*
- Zinnia *(Zinnia peruviana)*
- Californian Poppy *(Eschscholzia californica)*
- Candytuft *(Iberis sempervirens)*
- Cornflower *(Centaurea cyanus)*
- China Aster *(Callistephus chinensis)*

Natural or conventional beekeepers?

A growing number of beekeepers like to refer to themselves as natural beekeepers. While the bees kept by natural beekeepers obviously still produce honey, it is usually not collected for our consumption, but left in the hive for the bees, to ensure they survive through the harsh winter months. If you are thinking of starting beekeeping, it is important to think about what kind of beekeeper you want to be as it will inform what equipment you will need. (See following page).

Seed bombs

Bees need a reasonably wide variety of flowers to live on. However not all are always there to sustain them. A great way to boost the number of wild flowers is to make little 'capsules' of seed and compost that will sprout on their own: seed bombs

Seed bombs are perfectly safe, moreover, they are fun to make and a great way of helping to encourage plant biodiversity and put some colour in grey urban areas. A bit of clay, a handful of seeds, some compost and there you have it, a ready-to-be-planted mix of seed that will sprout after only a few drops of rain.

Basic seed bomb recipe:

5 tablespoons of seed compost

4 tablespoons of terracotta clay powder

1 teaspoon of seeds (add half a teaspoon for big seeds)

1 teaspoon of chilli powder as a pest deterrent (optional)

Water or liquid fertiliser if NPK is absent in the compost

Instructions:

- Mix all the ingredients together.
- Add water and fertiliser (optional) in small amounts at a time to shape walnut-sized balls until you get the right consistency, not too dry, not too sticky.
- Leave to dry.

Do: Mix the different seed varieties. Make sure the site is not being used or will not be demolished or built upon.

Don't: throw or plant them in conservation areas, farms or private gardens.

Drawing: Vera Zakharov

LEXICON OF BEEKEEPING:

Nucs/ Nucleus: A nucleus is a small colony accompanied by one queen. This is usually what beekeepers buy when they start out.

Swarming: Around spring, the queen leaves the hive with around half the colony. This is the natural way the colony reproduces. The remaining bees either stay in the hive and elect a new queen, or they may continue to leave and form another colony until there are no bees left in the original hive.

Top bar hive: This is the kind of hive used by natural beekeepers because inspections are easier and less disruptive for the bees. Even though natural beekeepers do not usually collect honey, inspecting their hive is still crucial to ensure the health and well-being of the bees.

Clove oil: Some natural beekeepers use clove oil to cover their clothes to help repel the bees during inspections, instead of using a smoker, which can alarm bees.

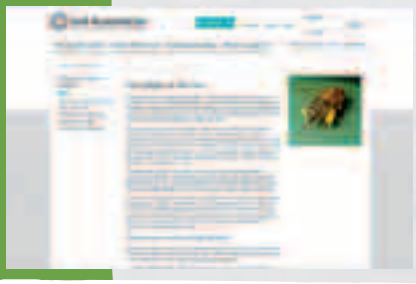
Campaigns

If you want to help support bee populations, a number of campaigns exist.

British Bee Keeper Association – Adopt a bee www.bbka.org.uk

38 degrees - Protect our bees
www.38degrees.org.uk/protect-our-bees

The Co-Operative – Plan Bee
www.co-operative.coop/Plan-Bee



Soil Association
www.soilassociation.org/wildlife/bees

Friends of the Earth – The Bee Cause
www.foe.co.uk

Bug Life - www.buglife.org.uk

CASE STUDY

NATURAL BEEKEEPING

First things first! If you are thinking about beekeeping as a hobby, your best bet is to start by joining your local beekeeping association. They are usually inexpensive to join and can be found almost everywhere *(www.bbka.org.uk)*. Attending meetings and events, and talking to experienced beekeepers, will be enjoyable and will help give you the confidence to get started. Ongoing advice from knowledgeable beekeepers will help to keep your bees healthy and possibly also keep you safe. Joining the local association will also provide public liability insurance and legal protection should anything happen to your bees.

The equipment: Beekeeping can be an expensive hobby – the hive is the most expensive piece of equipment you will need. New hives can be found online, but can be as much as a few hundred pounds. However, there is a great secondhand market, as throughout the year there are people starting and leaving beekeeping and most are either selling or buying equipment. Or, if you are DIY minded, you can build your own for as little as £25.

Where to get your bees: Some people get lucky and start with a fresh swarm that they capture. Indeed, you'll find people from beekeeping associations who will help capture a swarm for you. Although it might be less frightening to start with a smaller population, this is a perfect opportunity to begin with a healthy colony. Buying bees from an auction will be the cheapest, around £20 for a nucleus of 150 bees. You can also buy and receive them through the post, although this can be quite stressful so not recommended if other choices are available.

Resources: Keeping bees requires a little bit of dedication, but won't take up much of your time – on average about two hours a week spread over the course of a year. A quarter of an acre (1,000m2) will be enough for a hive in rural areas. If you live in an urban area, you'll be pleased to know bees adapt well to small spaces.

Photos by Vanessa Tourle: swarm capture

How to...
Set up a community shop

Introduction

Well over 250 community shops are currently listed in the UK. Twenty years ago, there were only about 30, but in recent years, they have been blooming all over the country, with one opening every three weeks on average. With people migrating from the countryside to cities and metro-style supermarkets popping up everywhere, local shops don't really have a chance to survive under their usual model; the competition is just too intense. They are usually more expensive, their turnover smaller, fresh produce not as fresh and their selection is often rather limited. Indeed, they are unfortunately closing at a pace, 400 in 2011 alone.
So how can community shops be thriving when so many similar village shops are going under?

The answer is in the strength of local communities, people coming together and investing themselves in a local enterprise from which they will benefit in return. Pouring money into supermarket shareholders' bank accounts takes money away from local communities, both in the countryside and in cities.

People living in small villages realise that a local shop has a lot more to offer than just the convenience of buying a loaf of bread or a pint of milk for breakfast. They actually bring and keep people together. With renewed interest in local produce, and simpler and greener lifestyles, community shops help to maintain and strengthen rural economies.

People have also realised that, with a bit of dedication and some hours volunteering, the benefits derived from a community shop are significant enough to want to get their hands dirty. With some financial support to get started and smaller margins required in order to be viable, these shops are actually very successful. At the end of the day, communities are investing their time and money into their communities rather than in big corporations, even generating a real positive outcome for the environment.
In this chapter, we explain the basics and the support available out there to set up a community shop.


Lodsworth Lader, W.Sussex

Where to start

A community shop is a social enterprise, which means it reinvests its profits in the business or the community and does not function to maximise profits for private shareholders.
www.vitalvillages.co.uk

In most cases, community shops grow out of an existing business that is either threatened with closure or wants to attract more customers through expansion or diversification of its their services. Post offices, cafés and pubs are all struggling, and it's not surprising that the majority of post offices today provide other services or are merged with a local shop. Grouping services is the key, especially in rural and remote areas. There are examples all around the country of community shops opening at the back of a pub, or even in churches. The very first thing to do is to visit as many community shops as possible to get a picture of what might work best in your situation.
Because a community shop is obviously created by and for a community, you'll need to attract a group of people to explore the feasibility of running a community shop. You will need to consider the potential demand, the logistics and set-up costs, and the day-to-day practicalities of running a shop.

Community shops are organised and run either by a manager who is supported by volunteers, or solely by volunteers. As a result, they are in the main dependent on those volunteers to stay in business. You will have to determine who and how many local people would be needed and committed enough to turn the idea into a reality. This means getting as many motivated people as possible involved before you can even think about finance or other issues. This will be a smoother and faster process if you can get people with the skills needed on board at an early stage. For example, it will help keep the costs down if a local builder, electrician, or plumber is able to donate hours to get the shop ready or take care of any necessary repairs and upgrades. A retail business professional or someone with marketing experience can help make the business case and raise the shop profile.

How to get people involved

You can start by organising an open meeting to gauge interest in the idea and to rally support. If people are interested, this meeting may result in the formation of a small steering group that can work collectively to gather interest from a wide range of people in the community. The next step might be distributing a simple questionnaire to the whole community. This will help you determine levels of interest, who is likely to use the shop and who might be interested in getting involved to set up and run the shop. Once you have analysed your questionnaires, you can start to plan the next steps. The steering group will have to formalise itself by electing a committee where roles and responsibilities will be decided. Then you can begin to discuss the practicalities of setting up your community shop.

- The shop location. If not taking on an existing building.
- How much will it cost and how will it be financed
- How will you make it economically viable?
- What will the shop sell and where to source locally?
- What services will be offered?
- How will it be run? Will it be volunteer led or paid manager with volunteer support?
- What type of legal and organisational structure does it require?
- How will it be differentiated from the competition?

Business structure and legal framework

Another important decision for the committee will be to determine the most suitable business structure and legal framework. The business structure is how the shop operates: the staffing organisation; pay structure; pricing policies etc., while the legal framework concerns how the shop is constituted in the eyes of the law; ownership and legal obligations. These issues need serious reading, consideration and discussion within the committee. However, there are two main legal frameworks:

- Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), for charities and co-operatives
- Community Interest Company (CIC)

Setting up a community shop might not be a typical business venture, but as with other businesses, you will have to develop a business plan. What applies when determining your business structure and legal framework will also apply to your business plan – you'll need to be meticulous and thorough. There is plenty of support available online including the government initiative for entrepreneurs (http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) that might prove useful. Plunkett Community Shop Network PCSN has a very well thought through leaflet available at http://www.plunkett.uk.net/node/2708 which complements community shops' principles. The Prince's Trust specialises in helping social enterprises' start-ups with a range of tools and resources (http://www.princes-trust.org.uk).

FACTS & FIGURES

- 97% success rate, when one third of new 'conventional business' close within three years.
- Start-up capital required: £20,000 - £200,000+
- Start-up time: typically 6-18 months.
- Turnover: £7,000-£900,000pa and mean average of £133,000.
- Operate at an average gross margin of 21%, much lower than most shops.

(Plunkett Foundation)

Fundraising and community support

Fundraising is a key step on your community shop journey, but it is complicated and usually difficult to secure. However, community shops may have an advantage over other community-based ventures, namely large numbers of supporters. All across the country, local people are investing small sums in community shop shares, without taking on too much risk. These commitments help turn ideas into realities. Getting the bulk of the financial support needed to realise the venture from the village or community it will serve is probably one of the most satisfying steps of the process. Depending on the size of the shop, you might need more financial support. There are different ways of securing funding, the following suggestions are a good start:

Source of funding and advice:
The Plunkett Foundation: www.plunkett.co.uk
Rural Development Programme for England: www.rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk
Big Lottery Fund's Local Food scheme: www.localfoodgrants.org

Plunkett Community Shop Network

The Community Shop Network is a Plunkett Foundation initiative to support community shops and provide assistance to people who are interested in setting them up. Their website provides factsheets, tools and other resources, as well as an active forum to discuss and share ideas with other like-minded people who have set up community shops. There is also a handy map and list of the successful community shops across England and Wales, as well as great case studies. **www.communityshops.coop**.

A separate organisation exists specifically for Scotland, the Community Retailing Network **www.communityretailing.co.uk**.

Links:

Vital villages: www.vitalvillages.co.uk/content/how-start-community-shop

Rural Shops Alliance: www.ruralshops.org.uk

Making Local Food Work: www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk

CHAPTER THREE
THE POTTING SHED
TOOLS and TIPS

Section 1: How to communicate
Section 2: How to get your funding
Section 3: Food film reviews
Section 4: Bibliography
Section 5: Glossary
Section 6: References

Introduction

You've had a taste of some of the types of projects and activities you could get involved with or even start yourself, but where should you start, who should you tell and where's the money coming from?
In this chapter, you'll find information and tips on how to find money for your idea; to shout about your project – its successes, and how to get others involved; and tips for successful campaigning for an issue that's been bothering you or you feel passionately about.
You'll also find film reviews and book suggestions to inspire and motivate you.

The ways we communicate have changed dramatically over the last century and now even the smallest projects can be heard in far-flung places.

photo: atomictoasters.com

HOW TO...

COMMUNICATE websites, newsletters, social networks, etc

Communication, particularly in today's internet-driven world, is an essential tool for creating local food systems. Publicising a project, attracting customers, raising awareness, showing support for a campaign – at some point you will need to employ a variety of tools to let people know what you are doing. Today, the benefit of the internet, access to computers and smartphone technology means that this can be done simply, cheaply and effectively. As well as external communication with the world 'out there', it is also important for communicating internally with group members, or staff, or members to enhance your work.

Websites and blogs

Although not essential for success, a website is the ideal way of letting people know you exist. Even just one page saying who you are, what you do and how to get in touch is advisable. Beyond that, from recruiting volunteers to keeping your community updated, a website is an essential tool. In the past few years, many web and blog applications have been developed to provide user-friendly tools for community groups and projects running on tight budgets to build their own websites and blogs. These technologies are no longer reserved for the 'professionals'. Indeed, everyone can use them, you'll be surprised to see what you can achieve and create.

Creating websites and blogs (a web-based diary or place to write articles) gets easier every day. And at the same time, the internet has reached almost every home. There is probably no better way for you to present your project clearly and allow people to get in touch with you. A few years ago, you would have needed technical computer skills, interest in coding a website and plenty of time. Today, there are websites that can do it for you, with no particular skills needed except for some word processing and basic internet knowledge.

Social networks:

Getting your project onto social-networking sites is another great way to promote your activities and keep in touch with your community. The predominance of Facebook is hard to avoid and probably doesn't need any advertising, and getting a page for your project is still useful. Make sure you put all your contact information on it (links to your website, email, phone number). Twitter is also useful and possibly easier and quicker to set up and run. Obviously, social networks are evolving so rapidly that they might be outdated by the time you finish reading this! You don't have to use them all, so consider which might be useful and what you have time for. Indeed, you can link all your accounts together so you don't have to repeat updates

through websites, newsletters, blogs, Twitter, etc. One post can automatically update all your accounts. When you first set up on any social networking sites it is important to add all related projects as 'friends' so you can follow them and keep your project updated instantly.

"Using Twitter to connect with local people, food businesses and bloggers is very important for Harvest, many of our connections wouldn't exist without it"

Jess Crocker, Harvest project manager, www.harvest-bh.org.uk

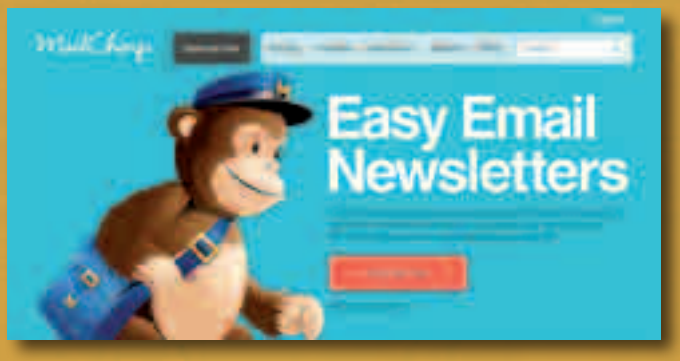
Newsletters:

Traditional paper-based newsletters have largely been superseded by the increasing popularity of online social networking as a tool. Despite this, paper newsletters are still a useful way of providing updates and information, particularly as some people don't have or don't want access to the internet.

The benefits of having a newsletter depend not only on how useful and interesting your information is, but also how relevant and up-to-date you keep your contact list. If you already have a database of contacts, a newsletter can be very effective. However, if you are just starting a project, you might want to build your contact list first and raise the profile of your project by writing articles for inclusion in newsletters and websites organised by other local groups.

Producing a newsletter can be time consuming, but it can also be a fun group activity and way of involving volunteers. Consider how much time you can give to the newsletter, as this will help you determine how much content there should be and how often it will be published. Also consider asking community members, local experts etc to contribute articles and features for the newsletter.

Newsletters can be paper based or can be designed and sent via email or posted on a website. Designing a newsletter does not have to be complicated (you can design a simple newsletter using a word processor such as Word) and electronic newsletter providers such as MailChimp.com can handle designs and contact databases all together on their platform.



Things you might want to include:

- Headline article – something that is topical and relevant to the project and that can give a focus to the newsletter.
- Project update.
- Related information – such as news items relevant to your aims and objectives.
- Dates for the diary – local news and events.
- Volunteering opportunities.

Creating your website

First things first, some questions to be answered:

- Who is the website for?
- What do you want to say?
- How much time do you have to keep your website up-to-date?

If it's your first attempt at creating a website, keep it basic. A simple, straightforward website will always look better, even if you don't have a lot of content, and it will be easier to maintain than a complicated website. It doesn't have to be an interactive social hub to be useful. You have certainly come across websites made by your colleagues and friends; it's useful to spend some time visiting these pages to get ideas of what you do and don't like and what is achievable.

Once you have a plan, you will need to draft the website content. Planning your website on paper will make it easier for you to build and organise your web pages. Good content is vital, as you want people to read and be interested, but the structure is equally important as you want people visiting your website to get the information as easily as possible. Most websites almost always have two sections: 'About us', 'Contact us'. Start with these – briefly describe what you do and the best way to get in touch with you.

Creating an email address especially for your project is a good idea and will make the website appear more professional. Once you have an idea of what you want, it is time to choose what you are going to use to build your website.

Wordpress.com is the current web application of choice for creating web pages easily. All the editing can be done online and it requires no installation or specific software. Once you've signed up, you can instantly start creating your pages, inserting pictures and web links as you would in a Word document. Wordpress has a large selection of website themes available to choose from. You can switch from one design to another and your text will be automatically updated to fit the theme. There are plenty of tutorials to help you and an active online forum will help answer questions and queries.
http://www.wordpress.com (for beginners, blog interface) or
http://www.wordpress.org (for intermediate user, offers more creative freedom)

Alternative web services includes www.blogspot.com and www.tumblr.com, both of which are widely used and as powerful for getting your project started.

Where to go if I need help ?

Free email service:
www.google.com/gmail

Wordpress guide:
http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Lessons

Online newsletter tutorials:
www.mailchimp.com/resources/

Design and writing tips:
www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/publicity/info_pdf/Newslet.pdf

iT 4 Communities:
For charities needing IT help.
http://www.it4communities.org.uk

Other interesting web applications:

Create online surveys with SurveyMonkey:
www.surveymonkey.com/
Map your data from Excel to GoogleMap:
http://batchgeo.com/

How much?!
Start with a free website and update for a ".com" for about £15 a year with wordpress.com. £?

Keep yourself updated:

Organic consumer: www.organicconsumers.org

Food climate research network: www.fcrn.org.uk

Grist: www.grist.com/food:

Mother nature network: www.mnn.com

The Ecologist: www.theecologist.org

Sustain: www.sustainweb.org

Tips for good communication

- Identify your audience and make it fit their needs – for example, if you want to communicate with older people then the internet may not be the best medium and more conventional paper communication may be more appropriate.
- Keep your message simple and don't 'over communicate' or it will switch people off.
- 'A picture is worth a thousand words' – food is visual and people respond to pictures more than words (think of all those photos of farmers that supermarkets put above fresh produce).
- Tell a story – food is personal and people will relate to individual stories that resonate with their own experience.
- Keeping a good list of contacts – whether on paper or in a database – is a valuable resource and the basis of your communication. Keep it up to date and add to it whenever you meet someone you want to stay in touch with.

Get the media working for you

Until about 2005, media meant pretty much only TV, newspaper and radio. If you wanted to get your words around, reaching them was at the top of your list. After that, Facebook took off, Twitter shortly followed, and a multitude of other services quickly sprouted around them. As discussed earlier, social media are very powerful and a must-have for your organisation or project. However, they have their limits too, and avoiding 'traditional' media would mean missing a larger audience. Traditional and social media run in parallel to each other. They both use each other to generate interest, which is exactly what you need to do. Indeed, when updating or posting on your profiles, you can only reach people in your contact list. That's restrictive. If you want to bring the attention of more people to your cause, traditional media will help you to widen your audience and reach people in other circle of interest.

Although getting in touch with your local media might not be as straightforward as 'tweeting' from your smartphone, it is not difficult either. After all, local media depend on good stories to keep their readers, listeners and viewers on board. If you have good content to offer, they will take it.

Depending on what your organisation or project does, you'll need to target your local media. Select magazines, radio shows and TV programmes that regularly cover similar stories and content. Browse their websites and collect email addresses and phone numbers of key contacts in a spreadsheet. Don't spam every single newspaper. Getting the attention of the media is similar to getting a job interview; your chances are higher when you target the right media. Obviously, your local paper is more likely to publish your story than a national one, but if your story is relevant, be confident.

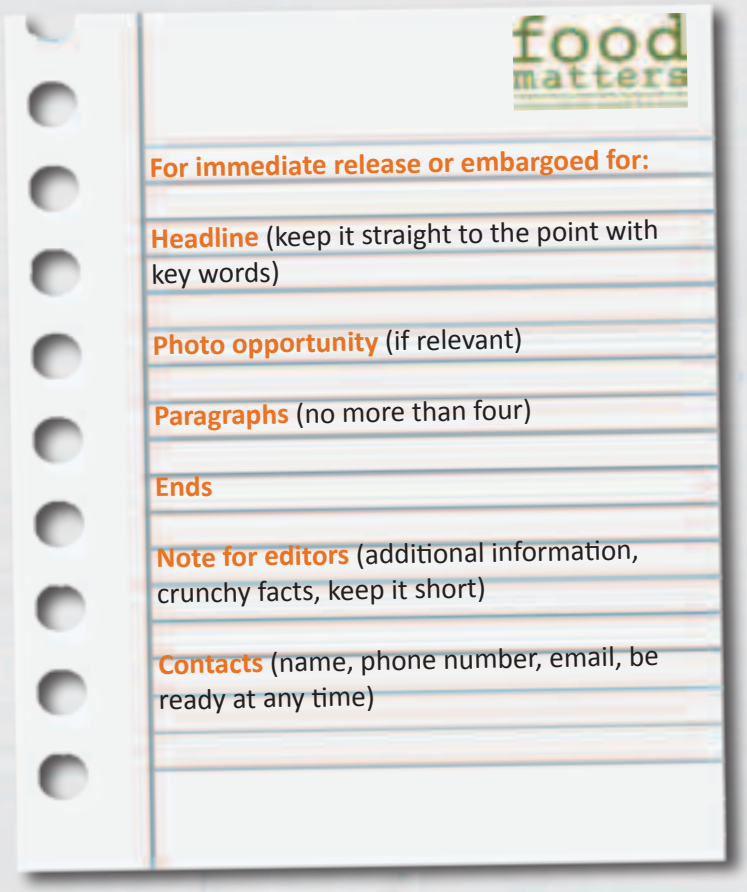
Press releases:

Continuing with the job hunting analogy, a press release is like a covering letter – it's your chance to stand out and get the journalist's attention. However, a journalist receives dozens of press releases every day. Yours should be reasonably brief and to the point, in order for the journalist to quickly decide whether it has interest for them. Press releases from charities or big organisations are usually always available from their websites, and they are a great way to get inspired.

Sowing the seed for press coverage is fairly easy work. Harvesting it might take more time than you think, which is another reason not to spam every media you know with your news. Time is always an issue for a small organisation, good time management is especially relevant when working with the press. If you have done a good job with your press release, the media will work for you, but you will still have to go on a bit of the journey to get the full benefits.

In the end, it's important to select which news will go where. Keep your audience updated regularly about your day-to-day business and keep your big success stories or events for the press. There are a lot of tips and guides available online about strategies for obtaining media coverage, but it's worth mentioning the great work made by Friends of the Earth for their local groups. More than fifty 'How to' leaflets are available online such as 'How to give a great interview', 'How to raise your local profile' or 'How to write a killer press release' (www.foe.co.uk/community/resource/how_to_guides.html). They are obviously 'green' oriented but will also have many useful pointers for local food projects.

The usual structure of a press release to follow is:



www.foe.co.uk/community/resource/how_to_guides.html

WHERE'S THE MONEY COMING FROM ?

Unfortunately, great project ideas don't usually come with money attached. However, there are plenty of funding opportunities available to bring these ideas to reality and help our communities support food systems to become fairer and more sustainable. The practicalities of how to get funding are the prime concern for most small groups with little knowledge or experience of fundraising. Small community projects may not have entire departments dedicated to fundraising like some big organisations, but often their size is to their advantage. Small organisations often have lower overheads, less bureaucracy and more on-the-ground experience of working with communities. With a bit of guidance and perseverance, the funding process can be more straightforward than it first seems. After all, accessing and securing funding is achieved by thousands of small community groups and social enterprises around the country. This section aims to give a summary of the common problems with funding and how to make your funding process

Lateral thinking

Securing funding centres around three questions: what is the project trying to achieve; who is it for; and what does it need to start. Before you start exploring the different funding options, you need to have clear answers to these questions. No matter what they are – for example, a new computer or some gardening tools for the community growing project – you need to ask whether you can get it without funding. Donations of equipment, time, premises, expertise, advice and skills are very valuable and you should prioritise such opportunities before seeking funds. That said, there are things that can't be given or borrowed, in which case, financial support may be your only option.
Who could fund your project is the next question to answer. Funding bodies have different policies, criteria and expectantions about the type of work they want to support.
It's important to start from the point of view of the project and to find funders that fit your project – not the other way round. Spend time looking at funders' websites, reading the funding criteria carefully talking to other organisations and projects around you to seek advice. Then, talk to funding bodies you think might be suitable.
Organisations mainly require funding for two purposes, supporting their campaign or project work, but also providing training or other services. Funds tend to be easier to access when the local community directly benefits from your project work, but funding to support the day-to-day activity (core work) of your organisation may be harder to find. Therefore, with good financial management, it's feasible to raise money to deliver services while dedicating a part of it to support your core work.

Diversification

The key to the financial sustainability of small projects is in seeking multiple sources of funding, in-kind support (such as free premises or volunteer help) and potentially income from trading in food or services (such as charging a fee for training). Diversification through different funding sources and income-generating activities will help ensure your project is more secure for the long term. Small projects often run on the dedication and passion of a few members or volunteers, so it's important to not put all your efforts into one large funding application. Funding streams come and go for many reasons, including deadline changes, criteria, aims and policy priorities. This might affect how your project is run or how it should evolve in order to keep funding streams coming in.

Things to remember:

Successful fundraising comes with experience. However, if you are just starting out or have been doing it for some time, remember there are a multitude of resources out there to help – this section attempts to point you in the right direction. Talking to other similar projects and organisations that are running similar projects in other areas can be helpful – they have already been through the process and are often very willing to talk about their experiences. And remember, funders are as keen to receive well-prepared and appropriate applications as you are to receive funds from them. Do not to get distracted by unsuitable funding opportunities, – remember why and what you are fundraising for.

Your funding strategy: 7 key things to know

Advice from Friends of the Earth who have many years of experience in supporting local groups.

Strategy: Write a fundraising strategy – determine how much you want to raise, what for, when, how, and who is responsible for what. Remember, it does not have to be pages and pages – it is more important to be comprehensive and consistent.

Contacts: Build relations with local funders, statutory agencies and decision-makers, to help you identify what funding opportunities may be suitable and keep you up-to-date on popular themes for funding.

Grants: Spend time checking the grant's criteria – ensure it matches your project's needs. What activity will the money cover: core, campaign or only specific project costs? Does this funding require match funding? Does in-kind support (i.e. volunteer time) count towards this? If not, what does? Will you get the funding upfront or is it paid in arrears? If in arrears, can your cashflow cope?

Budget: Produce a clear budget outlining how and when you intend to spend the money you are seeking to raise. Clearly outline how the money will support the delivery of your projected outcomes, what your indicators of success will be and how you will monitor your work.

Funders: Get lots of people to read your draft applications and ensure you include all the asked-for accompanying documents. What are the monitoring requirements and what feedback will funders want? Can you provide it and who will be responsible for doing so? Remember you have a legal obligation to record all monies received – does your treasurer have the skills and information needed to manage money properly? Invite funders to appropriate events you may be planning, ensure that they are aware of successes and positive publicity that you enjoy.

Training: Seek support and advice from your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or similar, talk to other projects and organisations and take advantage of any training opportunities that are available. Keep looking – deadlines are always looming but new funding streams crop up on a regular basis.

Variety: Build up a varied funding base so you are not reliant on a few sources of income – try to have a contingency plan in case your application is not successful.

www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_47_raise_funds.pdf

Possible sources of funding:

Awards for All – www.awardsforall.org.uk/
Big Lottery – www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation – www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/food.html
Tudor Trust – www.tudortrust.org.uk/
Awards for Food Action Locally – Wales only www.food.gov.uk/wales/nutwales/afal/
Community Food and Health - Scotland only – www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/funding/smallgrantsopen.php

Resources:

Useful websites for fundraising advice and support:
Fit for Funding: www.fit4funding.org.uk/
Funding Central: www.fundingcentral.org.uk/
Directory of Social Change: www.dsc.org.uk
Grants online: www.grantsonline.org.uk
Charities Aid Foundation: www.cafonline.org
The East Sussex council provides monthly updates on funding opportunities. While it's focused on East Sussex many of the funding bodies mentioned have a national remit. www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/funding/updates/

HOW TO...

RUN A CAMPAIGN

Have you been inspired by something you've read in this handbook and would like to get active in your neighbourhood? Are you frustrated about an issue in your local area and don't know what to do about it?
Do you want to see change happen but you're not sure who to talk to? Do you find that others share your thoughts?

There are many reasons why people and communities start campaigns – communities spurred into action by an impending supermarket planned on their doorstep, the closure of valued community services such as allotments or parks, communities concerned about neighbourhood safety, or changes in government policies that impact on local communities – planning, GM in our food, junk food advertising, etc. Whatever the reason for running a campaign – to be successful it will need to be well organised, resourced and supported. But don't think that means it has to be a high profile national campaign with fundraisers and recruited campaigners – small campaigns run by a group of local people on an issues they feel very passionately about can be and often are more powerful and successful.

Starting and running a campaign at a local level can be an effective way of raising awareness of national and international issues that affect us all and can lead to positive policy change. Here is a brief guide to help ensure you run a successful campaign, whatever the issue.

Name your issue

What is it that you want to campaign about? In your group, be clear about the issues involved and what you want to campaign on – name it. Some examples:

Sustain – The Real Bread Campaign - to unlock the social, therapeutic and employment opportunities offered by making real bread by hand.

Friends of the Earth – The Bee Cause – calls for a national Bee Action Plan.

Incredible Edible Todmorden – campaigning for local food.

Transition Town Totnes – strengthening the local economy, reducing the cost of living and preparing for a future with less oil and a changing climate.

Set your aim

You've decided on the problem or issue you want to address. Now you need a clear vision of the change you want to make. This should start with a broad, short statement of what it is you want to do.
Some examples:

The Bee Cause – aims:
- The government to adopt a National Bee Action Plan that ensures the way we farm our food, plan our towns and cities, and protect our wildlife, is better for bees.
- To encourage communities and individuals to plant bee-friendly flowers, buy local honey, and go on a Bee Walk.

Ledbury Opposes Tesco Superstore facebook campaign – aims:
- To stop any of the large supermarkets opening stores in the town.
- To raise awareness of the potential negative impact of an out-of-town supermarket on the town.

Action planning

Next, you need to determine the actions that will help achieve your goal/s. This is where you break down your campaign aim into the smaller things you want to achieve with identified tasks and stages. You should also include a contingency plan, so that when things don't go quite to plan, the campaign isn't derailed. Indentifying these tasks and stages will help you to achieve your overall campaign aim. You should try to make each of your objectives SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and within a timescale). When planning your campaign, you also need to have:

A campaign rationale: This should be a statement about why you are going to campaign on this issue. Why have you picked that campaign aim and why is it important? This will enable you to communicate effectively with the public and media when they question you about your campaign and why they should take an interest in it.

A campaign message: This is a short, snappy statement that will be your key communication tool with the public and media.

Put your campaign in context

You will need to find out what is currently happening on the issue, what has been done in the past and what might happen in the future. Understanding how the issue has been dealt with in the past will help guide your decision-making about how to progress your campaign actions. That might involve indentifying an opportunity you can take advantage of to help your campaign, or equally whether there is something that could derail your campaign or cause you difficulties. This is important as it will help to shape your action planning.

Become an expert

Knowledge is crucial to running a successful campaign. Detailed information – facts, figures and case studies – will help you make a case for change. And in order to persuade people to make the change you want or to get them on your side, you need to gather as much evidence as possible to support your cause. You can research through:

- Libraries, national and local surveys, newspapers, the internet and, most of all, people affected by the issue you are campaigning on can be useful.
- Contact groups in other areas that are campaigning on similar issues to share experience of what works.
- Local councils hold a lot of information, much of which is freely available.

Be resourceful

For your campaign to be a success, you'll need support and resources. Think about people who could help you. Campaigns often recruit advocates and allies to help promote their cause. Where might you find supporters? Existing local groups, schools, students, academics, local businesses etc.

Know your opponents

Who is against you? What reasons do they have for opposing you? What arguments do you think they might use? What arguments can you use against them?

Resources:

The People's Budget: http://www.thepeoplesbudget.org.uk/start/howtocampaign/
Take Part: http://bit.ly/WTWKoJ
Friends of the Earth: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_presentations/ne_campaign_planning.pdf
Effective Campaigning by Unison: http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf
Aimed at students: http://www.bl.uk/learning/citizenship/campaign/runcampaign/runyourcampaign.html

FILM REVIEWS

Dirt: The Movie (2009)

By Bill Benenson, Gene Rosow (USA)

Dirt is a well-made and accessible documentary that focuses on soil and how important it is for life on Earth. *Dirt: The Movie* takes you all around the world, from India to Africa, explaining and demonstrating what soil is all about, what's in it and why it is so precious. It will appeal to everyone curious about the role of soil in food production, but also about soil ecology. The movie features great interviews from worldwide environmentalists, but also gives unique outlooks with passionate figures such as mycologist Paul Stamets. You'll never look at earth in the same way again.

http://www.thedirtmovie.org/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1243971/

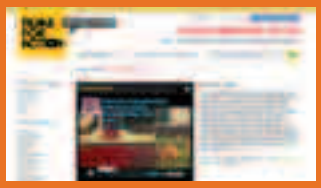
Flow, For Love of Water (2008)

By Aaron Woolf, Ian Cheney (USA)

Living in Great Britain, it's quite easy to forget how water and particularly fresh water is so valuable. While this documentary focuses on the impact of bottled water in North America and the privatisation of water distribution in South America, it is a reality check for everyone, no matter where we live. Because climate change already affects the availability of water resources, and therefore food production, *Flow* is an interesting film that educates about water, essential to the understanding of our global food system.

http://www.flowthefilm.com/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1149583/

FILMS FOR ACTION



Filmsforaction.org is the place to go to watch films about social change, free of charge! Although not 100% dedicated on food issues, FilmsforAction does have a food section and regularly updates, showcases and promotes must-see documentaries. A great website for your bookmark list. http://www.filmsforaction.org

Food Matters (2008)

By James Colquhoun, Carlo Ledesma (USA)

Food Matters revolves around two main mottos, 'let thy food be thy medicine' and 'you are what you eat'. If you live by that, you will love it. Aimed at the general public concerned about their health and their plates, *Food Matters* is probably one of the most serious food and health documentaries released. North America consumes a lot of food and a lot of pharmaceutical drugs to cure excesses. While it can be distancing to watch stories and arguments centred on North American culture, the truth is that obesity and food-related diseases are all increasing in the UK and Europe. *Food Matters* raises some controversial points around pharmaceutical companies and policies on cancers, but the arguments are usually well balanced. If you want to know more about health and food, this is the one to watch.

http://www.foodmatters.tv/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1528734/

The Future of Food (2004)

By Deborah Koons (USA)

Who knows what the future of food will be like, but genetic engineering is already part of the world's food production. The movie centres on a few famous cases about North American farmers who got into lawsuits with Monsanto because of cross-pollination issues. The film is very interesting and clarifies a lot of issues around GMOs, but unfortunately is rather drawn out and laboured in some parts. Still, well worth a watch if you want to know more about the technologies involved in food.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0427276/
http://www.thefutureoffood.com/

The End of the Line (2009)

By Rupert Murray and Charles Clover (UK)

Finally, a film about fish. There have been countless debates around eating too much meat and how livestock production affects the climate, but very little tackling fish and overfishing. Rich in healthy fats and proteins, fish is believed to be the healthiest 'meat'. But a rapidly growing global population and a desire for cheap fish haven't been without consequences for the planet, as most fisheries are now in serious trouble. There is just not enough fish in the sea any more. We don't really see it because the trouble occurs below the waves, and aquaculture (fish farming) is rapidly growing, but the problem is still there. *The End of the Line* covers every aspects of the overfishing problem and presents the issues with compelling footage from all around the world. It shows that although fish may be a healthy option, it is very far from being an environmentally friendly meal. Not to be missed.

http://endoftheline.com/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1176727/

Forks Over Knives (2011)

by Lee Fulkerson (USA)

In the vein of *Food Matters* (2008), *Forks over Knives* focuses on the benefit of a plant-based diet on human health. Could the spread of cardiovascular diseases and cancers be halted and even reversed by changing our diets? That's what the writer of *Forks Over Knives* believes and the evidence the film demonstrates is quite compelling. With the help of renowned physicists and nutritionists, *Forks Over Knives* presents epidemiological studies, such as The China Study, and reveals how the rich food we eat in the West tends to make us sick. Without any animal welfare or environmental issues involved, *Forks Over Knives* get straight to the point with great clarity. As the vegan fireman interviewed puts it: *"The answer to Western diseases is so simple it's criminal – plant-based diets".*

http://www.forksoverknives.com/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1567233/

Our Children Will Accuse Us (2008)

by Jean-Paul Jaud (France)

The risks and effects of pesticide use on human health and the environment have been controversial for quite a while. The question of pesticide residue in food is even more controversial, opposing organic farming versus conventional methods. Are conventional foods safe? A little village in the rural area of the Cévennes, France, decided not to risk it and so provided organic lunch to the school's canteen. The film goes from there, interviewing many activists around the French food system, from local producers to health professionals. While the tone is rather dramatic at some points, the film makes a good job of asking the right questions and getting the answers.

www.nosenfantsnousaccuseront-lefilm.com/
www.imdb.com/title/tt1319645/

Our Daily Bread (2005)

by Nikolaus Geyrhalter (Austria)

Have you ever been in an apple-packing factory? Or in a meat-processing plant? *Our Daily Bread* is your ticket to view today's food production. For a change, this is not about the US, but about Europe's agriculture, what we really eat and how it's produced. Without any commentary or voices, *Our Daily Bread* is a unique and intriguing set of footage of today's food production, showing reality without any compromise.

www.ourdailybread.at
www.imdb.com/title/tt0765849/

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil (2006)

By Faith Morgan (USA)

Cuba suffered extremes of economic and food hardship after the end of the Soviet Union. Large Soviet subsidies suddenly stopped, fuel became scarce and artificial inputs for farming unaffordable. What's so interesting in today's context is that it makes a perfect scenario for a world without oil. Cuba had to reinvent itself in order to survive. It resulted in one of Cuba's most successful stories, the development of organic agriculture and urban farms. Today, while a lot of food is still imported, towns and cities produce almost nine-tenths (90%) of their vegetables on small-scale farms using organic methods. *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil* gives an incredibly refreshing view on the island. Still living under its famous motto 'waste not, want not', Cuba reveals itself to be quite different from what is assumed in the West. This film also does a good job of showing the realities and the scars that 'the special period' has left on its people, as well as the ingenuity of the Cuban people in overcoming the challenges of a world without oil.

http://www.powerofcommunity.org/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0814275/

We Feed the World (2005)

By Erwin Wagenhofer (Austria)

The current global food system is an upsetting one. The world's agriculture produces enough food to feed five billion people, and yet still, one billion are starving. Farms are getting bigger to guarantee cheaper prices, but why pay less to waste more? *We Feed the World* is a direct attack on the globalisation of the food system, revealing the way our food is produced and the economics behind it. The film is very well realised and takes the audience to interesting places. Be aware that some interviews in the film are rather enraging, like the one with Peter Brabeck, chief executive of Nestlé and notorious supporter of free-trade economics. Because it is focused on Europe, *We Feed the World* provides great insights on our highly subsidised food system, a real must-see if you would like to understand more about complex issues.
http://www.we-feed-the-world.at/en/film.htm
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0478324/

Food Fight (2008) by Christopher Taylor

Over the course of the 20th century, our food system has been co-opted by corporate forces whose interests do not lie in providing the public with fresh, healthy and sustainably produced food. Fortunately for America, an alternative emerged from the counter-culture of California in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where a group of political, anti-corporate protestors – led by Alice Walters – voiced their dissent by creating a food chain outside of the conventional system. This saw the birth of a vital, local, sustainable and organic food movement that returned taste and variety to the nation's tables. *Food Fight* looks at how American agricultural policy and food culture developed in the 20th century, and how the California food movement has created a counter-revolution against big agri-business.

www.foodfightthedoc.com
www.imdb.com/title/tt1193092/

Seeds of Freedom (2012)

by The Gaia Foundation and the African Biodiversity Network (UK, Kenya)

Seeds of Freedom is a short documentary narrated by actor Jeremy Irons about the role of seeds in food production. Agriculture has changed a great deal over recent years. In fact, it has changed more over the past 50 years than the previous 10,000. There is much tension and debate across the food system, but the subject of seeds creates special turmoil. *Seeds of Freedom* looks at the unique role that seed saving plays in the life of farmers. Visiting India, Ethiopia, Kenya and other places, the film shows the importance of seed diversity and seed saving, not only for the quality of the food, but also for the livelihood of farmers. The development of modern technology in agriculture and the appearance of F1 hybrid seeds have changed everything. With these new technologies, farmers couldn't reuse their seeds the following years and would have to buy new seeds every year. The privatisation of the seed not only changed the way agriculture is carried out; it privatised the food system and put control in the hands of corporations. It is a complex subjects, but in just 30 minutes, *Seeds of Freedom* succeeds in covering a wide range of aspects with great simplicity and stunning footage.

Watch in online for free on:
http://vimeo.com/43879272

King Corn (2007)

by Aaron Woolf, Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis (USA)

The USA grows massive amounts of corn. It's not that people in the US are sweetcorn salad fans; it's that everything they eat has corn in it. Through processing, it's now possible to get so many cheap products out of corn that the food industry commonly replaces one product with a cheaper corn by-product. High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is one of them, but you can also get corn oil, corn starch, corn flour... and it's everywhere, in drinks, beer, ketchup, bread, breakfast cereal. *King Corn* tells the story of how the US got to this point and describes what the problems are with intensive, subsidised and monocrop agriculture. Although the corn problem is typically North American, there are many parallels that can be drawn in Europe and that's what makes *King Corn* interesting to watch even from a European point of view.

http://www.kingcorn.net/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1112115/

The Price of Sugar (2007)

by Bill Haney

On the Caribbean island of the Dominican Republic, tourists flock to pristine beaches, with little knowledge that a few miles away thousands of dispossessed Haitians are under armed guard on plantations harvesting sugarcane, most of which ends up in US kitchens. Cutting cane by machete, they work 14 hour days, 7 days a week, frequently without access to decent housing, electricity, clean water, education, healthcare or adequate nutrition. *The Price of Sugar* follows a charismatic Spanish priest, Father Christopher Hartley, as he organises some of this hemisphere's poorest people, challenging the powerful interests profiting from their work. This film raises key questions about where the products we consume originate, at what human cost they are produced and ultimately, where our responsibility lies.

http://www.thepriceofsugar.com
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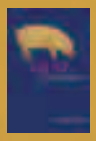
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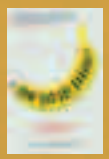
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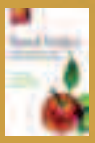
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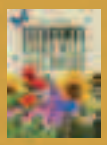

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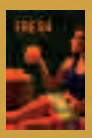

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GLOSSARY

Food desert: A food desert is an area where access to food, and especially healthy food, is very limited or non-existent. Residential areas very often qualify as food deserts because they have no food retail outlets and therefore consumers must rely on transport.

Food miles: Food miles is a concept introduced in the 1990s by food policy professor Tim Lang, in order to demonstrate the issues around transport in the food industry. The food miles of an item represent its journey from farm to plate, taking into account transport in production, processing and distribution. It is generally accepted that high food miles increase the environmental impact of food, particularly in terms of the use of fuel (see Eating Oil, 2002).

Ecological footprint: The ecological footprint is a measure of humanity's impact on Earth. This concept gives a standard way of illustrating the demand an activity or a lifestyle makes on the planet's limited resources. It is particularly used in environmental assessments to quantify sustainability and is measured in 'global hectares', representing the amount of land needed to support what is assessed (the activity or lifestyle of e.g. an individual, business or a community).

Food Footprint: A food footprint is simply the ecological footprint of a food item. Sometimes referred as 'foodprint', this concept illustrates the environmental impact of food, including water use, land requirement and energy demands and it covers production, distribution, consumption and waste.

Organic agriculture: Organic agriculture is an agriculture method that excludes the use of artificial pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Because of the global nature of our food system, organic agriculture is organised with government-approved labels to guarantee to the consumer that food has been produced by organic methods.

Conventional agriculture: Conventional agriculture is the technical term used to describe food produced with artificial inputs such as herbicide, pesticides and fertilisers. Despite its name, conventional agriculture is fairly new, starting with the development of modern chemistry in the 20th century.

Greenhouse gas (GHG): A greenhouse gas is a gas with the potential to contribute to a greenhouse effect, leading to climate change. Globally, all measures are based on carbon dioxide (CO2) as the baseline. Methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O) are two of the most important GHG in agriculture. The global warming impact of methane is calculated as 25 times that of CO2 but it is less prevalent in our atmosphere.

Agriculture inputs: Inputs are the different compounds or products used in agricultural production and include fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides, as well as energy inputs like fuel. Water is also considered to be an input in cases where agriculture is heavily reliant on irrigation.

Food poverty: An individual's or household's inability to obtain healthy, nutritious food, or the food they would like to eat. Food poverty and economic poverty are linked, but other factors such as availability, and cooking and shopping skills are significant. Food poverty often results in poor diets and can contribute to lower health. Around 4 million people in the UK are estimated to suffer from food poverty.

Food system: All the activities and infrastructure involved in feeding a population: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming and disposing of food and food-related items. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each of these steps as well as 'waste-management' activities such as composting or land filling food scraps.

Local food web: A way of linking together food producers with the food retailers who sell their food, caterers, other food providers and the consumers in the community who purchase and eat their food. Food webs also try to capture the idea that local food-supply systems can have social, economic and environmental dimensions which go beyond simply getting food from A to B.

Sustainable food: Food which is produced, processed and traded in ways that contribute to thriving local economies, protect the diversity of both plants and animals, sustain the livelihoods of producers and growers and provide social benefits.

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Building Local Food Systems: A Handbook

Food Matters, Brighthelm Centre, North Road,
Brighton, BN1 1YD, United Kingdom
Tel: 01273 431 707
Email: info@foodmatters.org
Web: www.foodmatters.org

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