

Local Food

Organic Farming, Food Miles, Allotments and Gardens, Foraging



Marylebone Farmers' Market, London September 2005 Photographer: Justinc

The local food movement is a growing awareness that the costs of food are not reflected in the price. How food is grown, processed and transported matters, and this has led to a variety of initiatives to address the issue. These include organic food, fairtrade, farmers markets and farm shops, grow your own, in gardens and allotments, foraging, food co-operatives, garden sharing and transition towns.

Food security has also become an issue, with the prices of staple foods sky-rocketing along with the oil that it is essentially made from. Oil-based Fertiliser farming made economic sense when oil was cheap and plentiful, but now we have probably passed Peak Oil (according to the IEA chief economist, a threat concealed from the British public by the Labour government), the added care taken by organic farmers to keep their soil fertile without oil will pay off. Local organic food will soon be cheaper than mass-produced food on supermarket shelves.

LibDem policy:

Policy Paper 31 - Policies on Genetic Modification, published in 1999

4.3.1 Organic food is growing in popularity, and we wish to preserve the right of consumers to choose organic produce if they so wish. This freedom is potentially threatened by GM farming if cross-pollination from GM crops proves to be an insuperable problem. (continues)

Policy Paper 45 - Local economies, local choice, published in 2001

4.3.1 We support local produce being sold to local people through local outlets. This maintains money in the locality, cuts out food miles and provides the opportunity for people to buy fresh food that can often be special to its region - saving energy as well as directing local resources at local people.

Policy Paper 77 - Green and Prosperous Communities, published in 2007

4.1.3 includes: Support local markets and farmers markets using single regeneration grants for local shopping areas, to preserve a diversity of small local shops.

4.4.4 includes: Encourage local authorities, health trusts and schools to procure at least a third of the food they buy from healthy, local sources - encouraging small suppliers, and discouraging transport pollution.

Policy Paper 82 - Zero Carbon Britain - Taking a Global Lead, published in 2007

4.5.3 ends: To minimise the risk of food shortages in developing countries it will be necessary to adopt policies such as prioritising the aid budget on stimulating indigenous food production and avoiding excessive incentives at home to convert food crops into biofuels.

4.6.10 ends: We will seek to increase the potential of soil as a carbon sink by promoting responsible soil management using Soil Management Plans.

Challenge:

07 Winter	p15	What Use For Farmland
08 Spring	p5*	A New Voice For Rural Britain
08 Winter	p15	GM - The Great Divide
09 Spring	p15	GM - Essential For The Future
09 Summer	p4	A Local Green Way Out Of Recession
10 Spring	p22	The Path To Transition
11 Spring	p22	GMOs Debate

* Conference Special Pullout

Resources:

Rob Hopkins' book on local food <http://transitionculture.org/2009/10/05/a-review-of-local-food/>

f3 - specialising in local food <http://www.localfood.org.uk/>

Big Barn - Community Interest Company <http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/>

Sustainweb - The alliance for better food and farming <http://www.sustainweb.org/>

Slow Food - global organization linking good food to community and the environment.
<http://www.slowfood.com/>

Local Food Grants - a £57.5 million programme of grants to help locally grown food.
<http://www.localfoodgrants.org/>

Farmers Markets - <http://www.farmersmarkets.net/>

Making Local Food Work - a programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund
<http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>