Scottish Food Coalition

Kitchen Table Talks Report

A Seat at the Table:

Becoming a Good Food Nation is everyone's business



Kitchen Table Talks

Introduction

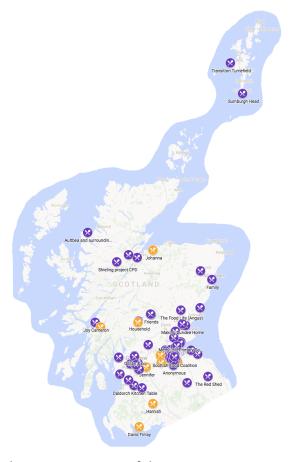
Between February and April 2018, over 800 people discussed the future of Scotland's food system in Kitchen Table Talks. Conversations took place from the Scottish borders to the Shetland Islands, around dinner tables, in town halls, community gardens and allotments, at Universities and places of worship.

Our current food system has long been seen as a logistical triumph, with well-stocked supermarket shelves, Scottish produce exported all over the world, and new products bringing greater profits. The cracks are starting to show, though. Whether it is the steady rise in food banks, the demise of insect populations, or the mounting costs of dietrelated diseases, it is becoming clear that this food system needs fixed.

The Scottish Government recognise the need to address the issues of injustice and unsustainability that surround our food, and have committed to introduce a new law that will cut across the food system: the Good Food Nation Bill.

Given this exciting opportunity, the Scottish Food Coalition launched Kitchen Table Talks to hear what people in Scotland think about the future of our food system. We invited groups and individuals to discuss what 'living in a Good Food Nation' means to them and come up with their top five concerns about the food system and top five priorities for action. These 'top fives' were then fed back through an online form.

140 conversations took place, 84% were groups of varying sizes and 16% were individual responses. People hosted Kitchen Table Talks with their communities, friends, families, neighbours, and colleagues, with lively discussions revealing a real passion for food, and appetite to participate in shaping the Good Food Nation agenda. In total, over 800 people participated in Kitchen Table Talks.



6 key themes came out of the 600+ top concerns and priorities for action that people shared with us: social justice at home and abroad, food culture, food production and the environment, health and wellbeing, livelihoods and supply chains, and rights, democracy and governance. Within these, we grouped and counted responses under more specific 'categories' to find out the most common concerns and priorities for action. Read on to find out more.

The Scottish Food Coalition is a group of organisations who have come together with diverse concerns about the food system, including food poverty, biodiversity loss, climate change, public health, worker rights and animal welfare, and a belief that we can better meet these challenges by working together.

How did we analyse the responses? It's explained here, Annex: Methodology

What are your top 5 concerns about the food system in Scotland?

Affordability of healthy diet

Environmental impact of our food

Disconnect from the origin and value of food

Food waste

Plastics and packaging

What are the top 5 actions that Government should take for Scotland to become a Good Food Nation?

Facilitate local food economies

Invest in education and skills training

Make all food production sustainable

Improve access to good food Support community food initiatives

People also said...

"It would be great to make the Kitchen Table Talk format known and accessible to a wider range of people - we're conscious that we are, to varying extents, "the usual suspects", and there is huge potential to use the format to gather the views of people who are not!"

"Even folk who are involved in a local food growing group still feel dis-empowered when it comes to suggesting change at Government level. We need to make it relevant to everyone."

A group in Shetland

"We are a small group in our village ... sometimes we feel quite isolated ... We thoroughly approve of ... how you are engaging us to take part, thank you, very excited about our food future."

Kitchen Table Talks

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Kitchen Table Talks made clear that people care about the future of Scotland's food and have strong views on what the Scotlish Government could do to transform the food system. These are the 10 actions that were mentioned most:

- 1 Facilitate local food economies
 - Action to help Scotland grow more of what we eat, and eat more of what we grow. This could be regulation, subsidies, and investment in infrastructure to stimulate local food economies, where small businesses from field to fork can thrive, and everyone can access food produced in their local area.
- 2 Invest in education and skills training for all ages
 Resources need to be invested to provide more free skills training opportunities for children and
 adults, including growing and cooking food, and to provide clear and accessible information about
 the food system including on nutrition, social justice and sustainability issues.
- 3 Make all food production sustainable through incentives and regulation
 'A reform of farming and land management policy is critical to supporting the delivery of public goods and protecting the environment. We need to reduce the use of pesticides, chemical fertilisers and routine antibiotic use, and support small-scale producers and organic farmers.
- Improve financial and geographical access to good food
 Policies should tackle poverty and ensure universal access to food, including through fair wages, adequate social security, targeted subsidies or price controls on healthy foods, especially fresh produce, and action to make affordable fresh produce available in all local communities.
- Provide more and longer-term support to community food initiatives

 More funding and investment in infrastructure are needed to support existing and new community food projects, including growing, cooking, distributing, and sharing meals. Community food activities are central to social cohesion, empowerment and resilience.
- Regulate the food industry for healthier food environments
 Intervention to reduce the sugar and fat content of foods, control the use of potentially harmful substances in food processing, and restrict advertising and marketing of unhealthy foods.
- 7 Ensure access to land for food production Land reform should make urban land available, with secure tenancy, for food growing in allotments, market gardens, and community garden, as well as facilitate rural land access and ownership for new entrants and small-scale farmers.
- Take action to reduce plastic packaging

 Taxation and/or regulation powers should be used to reduce packaging, especially of fruit and vegetables. Minimising single-use plastics and improving recycling is essential too.
- 9 Lead by example through public procurement
 Public food procurement ought to favour local and organic produce, and the highest nutritional
 standards should be applied in public kitchens, especially in hospitals and schools.
- Make food policy more coherent and democratic

 Food policy should be coherent, with coordination between Government departments, and grounding in evidence-based practice. There should be more restrictions on corporate lobbying, and opportunities for civil society participation, for example through Local Food Councils.

What next?

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We need an ambitious and inclusive consultation on the Good Food Nation Bill.

With over 800 people participating in Kitchen Table Talks, it is clear that there is public appetite for a national conversation on what it means to be a Good Food Nation.

The Good Food Nation Bill is no ordinary piece of legislation: food touches everyone's lives, and this legislation is an opportunity to get it right for people today, and into the future.

This requires leadership and ambition. The Scottish Government's national objectives for a fairer, healthier, safer, greener, and smarter Scotland, and our international commitments on the Sustainable Development Goals, cannot be met without changing the food system.

Scotland could be a European leader by taking a framework approach to food challenges. Creating a new legislative framework for our food will be relevant to social security, rural economy, health, environment, climate change and land reform, economy and fair work, portfolios.

People in Scotland must be at the centre of developing this new framework for our food system.

We are calling for an extended public consultation on the Good Food Nation Bill, that is designed to maximise participation and ensure that everyone's expertise, lived experience, and priorities are heard.

The Scottish Government is recognised as a pioneer government in the Open Government Partnership and has committed to foster openness, transparency, and citizen participation.

The Kitchen Table Talks process generated valuable learning points that can help to ensure that the consultation process on the Good Food Nation Bill is effective and inclusive. The main points of feedback are:

- 1. The consultation needs to facilitate group responses alongside individual responses;
- 2. The consultation process needs to be longer than 12 weeks to ensure wide participation;
- 3. Time and resources have to go into designing and delivering an inclusive consultation process that goes far beyond online engagement;
- 4. The consultation needs to provide accessible but authoritative information on food system issues in Scotland, in different formats.

Greater participation can help make food policy more transparent, responsive, accountable, and effective.

The Scottish Government committed to consulting on a Good Food Nation Bill in their 2016 and 2017 Programme for Government, but without a clear timeline for the consultation, the Bill could easily slip down the Government's priorities.

We need leadership to keep the Good Food Nation Bill on the agenda and provide a seat at the table to everyone who wishes to be involved in making Scotland a Good Food Nation.







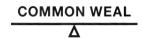








































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