

January 2017 Vicki Hird

Food Security and Climate change – Notes of presentation to Food Security Meeting and Climate change meeting of LCCP 24 January 2017

Sustain is an alliance of 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. It works for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity.

Opening remarks

After the previous presentations, there is no need to go over the need for action on climate and pretty urgently. How far this does and could affect food security in the widest sense is not established.

The key is about how far people have the right to food (Nutritional security – not merely calories) and can exercise control over their food access. Food Security *per se* can mean just having the finance to buy food from wherever it is cheapest. Relying on overseas and long distance markets, however, makes us:

- **vulnerable** to supply shocks,
- **unsustainable** in terms of emissions, chemicals, loss of control in complex chains and connection with farmers and
- **irresponsible** – drawing land and water supplies from around the globe – trade not bad but should be sustainable and ethical.

Longer term, London will be at risk from less stable supplies especially from overseas – the most vulnerable feeling the impact first – But the reality is that no-one would believe right now that there is a **threat so we** need to consider that **inertia** when we plan. how do we have the conversation.

And there is London's impact – what is its Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory (including from land use change overseas) and water and land impact – how can we be part of the solution in terms of mitigation?

Specifics to London as a pioneer city –

- London only exists because it is allowed to for supplies, for removal of waste.
- It is also huge, growing and changing in demographics.
- We partly know the London food climate foot print – though need more analysis.
- But do we apply that knowledge to food related policies –are we currently or planning to adjust policies according to the data? That will not be easy to do., given the web of interactions where solutions lie - From transport and planning to public guidance and procurement –

- Much good work is celebrated in your London Food Board 10 year report and there are great ideas there and initiatives –
- But looking ahead, do the future plans increase ability of London dwellers to access health sustainable diet, for producers to produce sustainably and help tackle Climate emissions?

Solutions and opportunities

Looking at three areas:

- Consuming and Eating
- Farming and Producing
- Governance

Consuming and Eating

Some ideas for action

1. Do we have a **clear picture** on how food secure London is? Like any City it depends very much on outside to ensure availability and remove waste. A small impact on supply chains in some key areas London sources food from could be significant (eg sea level rise or prolonged drought in areas supplying bread wheat or disease incidence caused by climate change in priority fruit supply regions). Extreme weather events could affect normal UK production. How many days away are we from empty shelves? Just coffee and courgettes causes panic in a rather daft way.
2. There are few places in world as abundant in diverse food and the means to procure it as London (notwithstanding pockets of scarcity and high food poverty). We should aim to have a **debate** with Londoners about the food they eat. Using the LFB members.
3. Have we considered climate **refugees** in planning for future supply needs?– What of the future – inevitable – how would G London cope 5, 10, 40% more . Can we plan for a bigger London to feed itself.
4. Promoting **Sustainable diets**. The evidence base is absolutely clear we need to eat more plants and less junk and less and better meat (Eatwell plate). Meat and dairy have a huge GHG contribution – reducing and improving intake could provide win win win scenarios: drastically improve FS by reducing land water take, whilst increasing efficiency of calorie use, reducing emissions and contributing to healthy eating targets and so on.
5. More **home grown feeds** could be part of the picture – including from the food waste stream fed to pigs - reducing the climate emissions overseas would help. Can the Greater London Area farming system contribute?
6. Zero waste is a no brainer and well covered by partners and others.
7. We can get **Corporations in London** - especially those that process or retail food and the food service sector competing to do activities to genuinely reduce climate impacts (such as use of electric vehicles, encouraging lower climate eating for staff and customers – the Welcome/ Sainsbury announcement over week end very innovative) – use the mayor clout to ask for more both in their supply chains but also encouraging sustainable diets in their customer base or workforce. The recent initiative by Wellcome Trust, Oxford Uni and Sainsburys PLC is an excellent example. (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4145298/Sainsbury-s-plans-help-customers-cut-meat.html>)

Farming and producing – the supply

1. Harder to crack as influence is small but can make London's pull impact and work with farmers in London – could we provide **infrastructure grants** for local distributing and processing hubs to make supply less vulnerable on major hubs, diversify production and support local horticulture. Part of an investment strategy?
2. We should **protect all high quality Grade 1** farm land for food growing and consider hinterland for new market gardens instead of housing or other developments. This could increase urban food production and distribution – particularly of more perishable horticulture crops - and new entrants into farming.
3. **More growing** – Sustain has a major programme of training and supporting people and communities to grow food to get multiple benefits (98,000 people got involved, 2443 growing spaces created and 64000 meals produced) – climate impact hard to assess. But can have dietary impact, skills and health impact, and can mean less meat and processed. More food security at a local level as can be highly productive. We would like to partner with others and seeing how we can measure the carbon impact of our initiatives. Whilst inevitably not the main solution, urban growing may have local nutritional security impact especially if scaled up.
4. Ensure less **waste** of what we grow in supply chain – already much going on. How can it be scaled up?
5. **Protect food workers**. We need to push for living wage and decent conditions for all food workers so we don't risk Food system failure via worker failure. Food workers in suicide watch is not sustainable.

Governance

1. If you do one thing it would be to **prioritise climate change action in food systems in London** – as you have done with health – and there are lots of mutual benefits. Plan for changes in food supply – what ifs. C40 leader on food
2. Drive **excellence in procurement** so change the menu (to the Eatwell plate guidance), change sourcing to sustainable low carbon supplies eg organic, and ensure producers here or overseas can produce in ways that protect workers, soil, water – future growing
3. **Work with food sector and sub sectors** to measure and set target to reduce London's food footprint like Bristol, Sydney – loads of work done.

Sustain and its London projects would welcome the chance to input in plans and implementation.

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