Could UK growers meet the demand for fruit and vegetables?

Rebecca Laughton – Landworkers' Alliance and Growing Communities' Horticulture Campaign

We must make UK fruit and vegetable supply more resilient

- Health imperative
- Labour crisis
- Climate change adaptation
  - Rest of world can't be relied upon to keep feeding UK (water shortages, floods, pest and disease outbreaks)
  - UK may become one of fewer countries that can still grow vegetables
- Climate change mitigation

Reduce long distance food transport

UK Horticultural Production(2018)

Vegetables

- 53% home produced
- 47% imported
- 131,000ha planted to veg (<1% of agricultural land)
- 2.4 million tonnes
- 40% lost through waste

Fruit

- 16.7% home produced
- 83.3% imported
- Total UK production 719,000 tonnes
- Home produced apples increased market share to 45% (from 33% in 2017)

%Domestic Production of Popular F&V = Import Substitution Opportunities

Peppers	10%
Pears	16%
Plums	17%
Tomatoes	20%
Cucumbers	24%
Lettuce	30%
Desert apples	31%
Courgettes	33%
Spinach	39%
Onions	49%
Broccoli and cauliflower	51%
Raspberries	56%
Beans	58%
Leeks	69%
Cabbage	92%

Large Scale Veg Production

- UK workers don’t want to do horticultural work

- Brexit labour crisis (SAWs needs 70,000, not 2,500 workers)

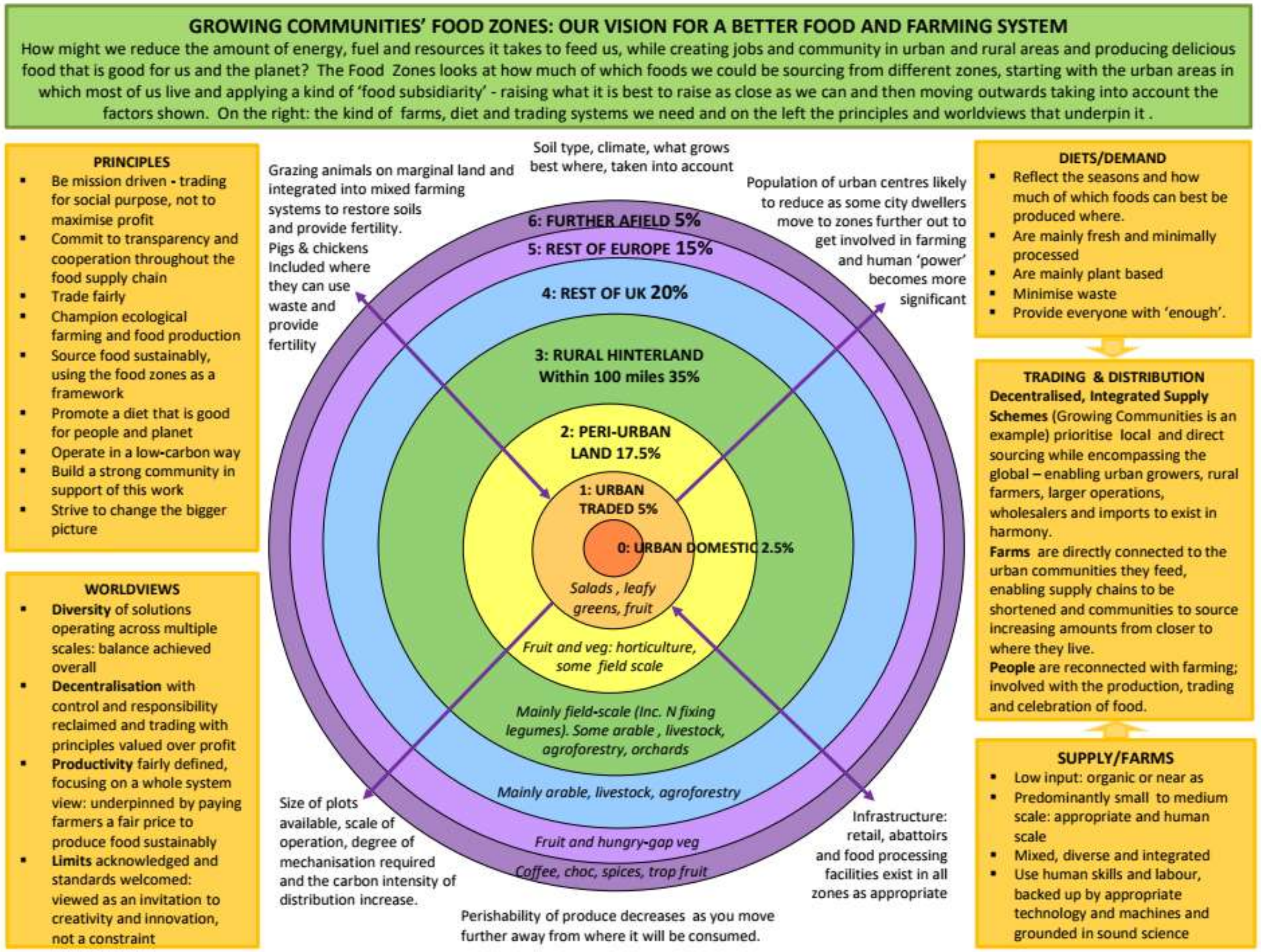
- Environmental impact (water, soil, monoculture)

- 85% sold via supermarkets

- Tight squeeze on margins

Introducing Food Zones

- Direct urban
- Direct peri-urban
- Direct rural hinterland
- Wholesale national
- Wholesale Europe
- Wholesale further afield



Growing Communities - An existing example in Hackney, London

Supplied by:

- 3 urban market gardens
- 3 peri-urban farms in Dagenham, Lea Valley and Enfield
- 3 farms in Kent, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk
- 2 orchards in Kent and

Routes to Market:

- 1600 weekly fruit and veg bags
- Weekly farmers' market
- Direct sales from urban market gardens

Alternative Routes to Market in Rural Areas

- Farmers markets
- Farmer led box schemes
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Farm shops
- Traditional greengrocers
- Food hubs and other online sales

Benefits of Alternative Routes to Market (ARMs)

- Localised supply and distribution
- 54-100% of sale price goes to growers
- Improves grower viability
- New entrants attracted to this kind of horticulture
- Better public engagement
- Organic produce more affordable than in supermarkets (inc. "Holiday

If all F&V that could be produced in the UK, but are currently imported, were produced in the UK, they would have a market value of £3.2 billion

Imagine if 10% of that £3.2 billion was spent in local food economies, rather than on imports ……….

Can we do it?

Some serious number crunching!

Total sales value of one Food Zones Unit (FZU): £1,350,000

Population of Hackney: 279,000

Population of UK: 66million

One FZU per 279,000 head of population = 237 FZUs

237 x £1,350,000 = £319,354,839

This represents 10% of £3.2 billion

Big Assumptions and Big Ambitions

- Uniform climate and soil quality across UK
- Equal ability and willingness to buy organic produce across all regions
- 237 is a lot of new Food Zones

Yes we can!

- Already happening in pockets across UK
- Better Food Traders will measure it and develop distribution
- Landworkers' Alliance will grow more growers!