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

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

49%

Peppers	10%	Spinach 39%
Pears	16%	Onions

Plums	17%	Broccoli and cauliflower	51%
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Tomatoes	20%	Raspberries	56%
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Cucumbers	24%	Beans	58%
Cucumbers	74%	Deans	00 70

Lottuco	200/	Leeks	69%
Lettuce	30%		

Decert apples	210/	Cabbage
Desert apples	31%	92%

Courgettes 33%

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' FOOD ZONES: OUR VISION FOR A BETTER FOOD AND FARMING SYSTEM

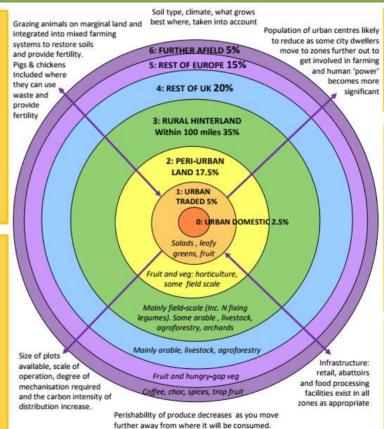
How might we reduce the amount of energy, fuel and resources it takes to feed us, while creating jobs and community in urban and rural areas and producing delicious food that is good for us and the planet? The Food Zones looks at how much of which foods we could be sourcing from different zones, starting with the urban areas in which most of us live and applying a kind of 'food subsidiarity' - raising what it is best to raise as close as we can and then moving outwards taking into account the factors shown. On the right: the kind of farms, diet and trading systems we need and on the left the principles and worldviews that underpin it.

PRINCIPLES

- Be mission driven trading for social purpose, not to maximise profit
- Commit to transparency and cooperation throughout the food supply chain
 Trade fairly
- Champion ecological farming and food production
- Source food sustainably, using the food zones as a framework
- Promote a diet that is good for people and planet
- Operate in a low-carbon way
 Build a strong community in support of this work
- Strive to change the bigger picture

WORLDVIEWS

- Diversity of solutions operating across multiple scales: balance achieved overall
- Decentralisation with control and responsibility reclaimed and trading with principles valued over profit
- Productivity fairly defined, focusing on a whole system view: underpinned by paying farmers a fair price to produce food sustainably
- Limits acknowledged and standards welcomed: viewed as an invitation to creativity and innovation, not a constraint



DIETS/DEMAND

- Reflect the seasons and how much of which foods can best be produced where.
- Are mainly fresh and minimally processed
- Are mainly plant based
- Minimise waste
- Provide everyone with 'enough'.

TRADING & DISTRIBUTION Decentralised, Integrated Supply

Schemes (Growing Communities is an example) prioritise local and direct sourcing while encompassing the global – enabling urban growers, rural farmers, larger operations, wholesalers and imports to exist in harmony.

Farms are directly connected to the urban communities they feed, enabling supply chains to be shortened and communities to source increasing amounts from closer to where they live.

People are reconnected with farming involved with the production, trading and celebration of food.

SUPPLY/FARMS

- Low input: organic or near as
 Predominantly small to medium scale: appropriate and human
- Mixed, diverse and integrated
 Use human skills and labour, backed up by appropriate technology and machines and grounded in sound science

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

Routes to Market:

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

2 orchards in Kent and

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

 $237 \times £1,350,000 = £319,354,839$

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!

