

Linking Learning & Lunch

9 September 2011, Glenmore Lodge

Seminar summary

Background

As part of Soil Association Scotland's Food for Life programme of work, the Linking Learning & Lunch seminar was delivered in partnership by Soil Association Scotland, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Eco-Schools Scotland and Sustainable Scotland Network. The seminar addressed bridging the gap between community **food education** – in schools and hospitals - and **food on the public plate**. The target audience for the seminar were the Local Authorities and NHS boards within the Cairngorms National Park boundaries – Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Perth & Kinross. All five Local Authorities are stakeholders in the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan, produced in collaboration with Soil Association Scotland.

Summary of the day

Forty delegates attended the seminar representing teachers and education officers, school meals caterers, local hospital caterers, public health professionals, food procurement and sustainability officers, local food producers and suppliers, local catering establishments, the Scottish Government, and the four organisations delivering the seminar.

Presentations

The seminar opened with talks which set the wider perspective of the Cairngorms National Park, the Soil Association and Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy. David Green, Convenor of the Cairngorms National Park Authority spoke of the Park's aspiration to become an exemplar for local food through the Food for Life Development Plan. Deputy Director of the Soil Association, Roger Mortlock, outlined the successes of Food for Life south of the border and commented on the strong position that Scotland holds due to its National Food and Drink Policy, which does not exist in England. David Thompson, Deputy Director of the Scottish Government's Food, Drink & Rural Communities Division made clear the Government's continued commitment to the National Food and Drink Policy.

Representatives from each of the partnership organisations presented on their areas of work most relevant to the seminar: Soil Association Scotland's Food for Life Supply Chains programme; Eco-Schools Scotland's new Food and Environment module; the Cairngorms National Park Authority's Food for Life Development Plan; and Sustainable Scotland Network's four national programme priorities of Best Value, Climate Change, Local Footprints and Procurement for Sustainability.

Margaret Stewart, Marketing Manager of Quality Meat Scotland presented the latest statistics on consumer behaviour around food choices. The figures show that more consumers are thinking about the quality, provenance and animal welfare when making their food choices.

Anna Bassett, Animal Welfare Advisor to the Food for Life Catering Mark described the impact of adopting the Catering Mark on animal welfare, and how increasing levels of animal welfare are guaranteed as a caterer progresses from bronze, to silver, to gold.

Norma Murray, Catering and Cleaning Manager at Highland Council spoke about the Food for Life Catering Mark in practice – Highland Council School Meals Service achieved the bronze Catering Mark in 2009 for the 9,000 meals served each day to all 173 of their primary schools.

Robin Gourlay from the Scottish Government spoke about Catering for Change, recent Government guidance on sustainable food procurement in the public sector. This document has been produced as part of the public sector procurement workstream of the National Food and Drink Policy. It tells you how you can use food procurement to support economic growth, contribute to health improvement,

and address national and local climate change targets. Robin talked about the commonly perceived obstacles to sustainable procurement and ways to get around these, highlighting Food for Life as a tried and tested framework for achieving change.

Networking

Following the presentations there was a chance for networking in the 'market place' where five key topics were represented: Food Education; Sustainable Procurement, Food for Life Explained, Supply Chain; and Healthy Communities. This gave delegates the opportunity to find out more about each of the topics, and to start thinking about the next steps for their organisation following the seminar.

Discussion & next steps

Delegates re-grouped after the networking and were given the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of experts on each of the five topics represented in the 'market place'. This sparked discussions on the need to work with suppliers and distributors, how to work within the current procurement procedures and how the education element will be beneficial to the current emphasis on outdoor learning.

Delegates were then invited to tell everyone about what they planned to take away from the seminar in the way of a new action for their organisation. Those who commented said they would be making their teams aware of the need to use more local food. On paper the follow up actions ranged from centring education topics around local food and arranging visits to producers to entering discussions with Soil Association Scotland on the steps involved in gaining the Food for Life Catering Mark. Several said they will investigate what can be supplied in local area and who can supply it.

The Lunch

A Food for Life gold standard lunch was served. Matt Dare, Head Chef at Glenmore Lodge used local, seasonal and organic produce from within the Cairngorms National Park boundary and its hinterland to create a delicious lunch which caused quite a stir amongst the delegates. The menu included wild boar and venison meatballs using meat grown within the Park; organic potatoes, vegetables and salad grown in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Perthshire; fresh homemade bread from the Mountain Café, Aviemore; and an incredible plum crumble cake made using organic plums from Moray.



Delegates networking over their Food for Life gold standard lunch

From left to right:
George Tarvit, SSN;
Ken Rundle, SAC;
David Thompson, Scottish Government;
David Green, Convenor, CNPA

Feedback

Many delegates said the day met and even surpassed expectations. They thought the topics generated a buzz and there was a lot of positivity and honest dialogue as a result of the presentations. The 'market place' proved popular if a bit short and for a follow up event we will plan to have more suppliers on hand for practical planning.

Information

Presentations

Copies of all the presentations given at the seminar can be downloaded from:
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/look-after/farmland/food/>

Press release

A press release was sent out to local Cairngorms press following the seminar (scroll to 15th September)
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/news/>

Food for Life Catering Mark

If you would like to find out more about the Food for Life Catering Mark, contact Elsie Downham
edownham@soilassociation.org / 07562 780 302 or visit
<http://www.soilassociation.org/Trade/Catering/tabid/1286/Default.aspx>

Soil Association Scotland

For further information about the work of Soil Association Scotland, visit
www.soilassociation.org/scotland

Eco-Schools Scotland

For further information on the Food and the Environment topic visit
http://ecoschoolsscotland.org/guide/The%20Ten%20Topics/food_1.html

Sustainable Scotland Network

For further information on using procurement for sustainability and other SSN topics visit
<http://www.sustainable-scotland.net/page.asp?pg=26>

Cairngorms National Park Authority

To find out more about the work of the Cairngorms National Park Authority visit
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/>

The bodies organising this seminar are supported by:

