

Cairngorms Food for Life

A variety of excellent food and drink is grown, reared and produced in the Cairngorms National Park. It's of key importance to the area, cutting across a range of sectors from agriculture and land management, to health and wellbeing as well as tourism. Food and drink is a major contributor to the local economy and employs a significant proportion of the Park's workforce.

The Scottish Government launched its 'Recipe for Success' policy in 2009 based around a variety of principles such as sustainable economic growth of the sector, healthy choices, accessible and affordable food for all and improving understanding about the food we eat.

In 2010, following on from the Scottish Government's strong lead, the CNPA in partnership with Soil Association Scotland, launched the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan. The plan aims to increase availability and use of local, fresh and seasonal produce for both residents and visitors and seeks long-term improvements to health, the environment and the economy.

Some of the key developments to date include:

- With funding from LEADER the project has already seen the production of the Cairngorms National Park Producers Directory to help improve supply and availability of local produce as well as a Local Food & Drink guide, working closely with the Cairngorms Business Partnership.
- There was a Successful Linking, Learning and Lunch Seminar with a view to increasing procurement of local produce.
- Academy of Culinary Arts Chef Adopt a School programme is now underway with 16 chefs allocated to a school in the Park with a view to increasing general awareness about food and what's available on the doorstep.
- Help has been given to those schools wanting to start cookery clubs and the project has been working with the NHS to provide nutrition courses for teachers in the Park as well as working with the Royal Highland Education Trust to ensure schools in the Park have the opportunity to visit a farm and learn more about where food comes from.
- In tourism, the project has attended local events such as agricultural shows and festivals.

Food for Life has a £116,000 budget over three years with 50% from the European funded LEADER programme and the remainder from the CNPA, with a view to delivering the following outcomes:

- Increase the amount of quality food and drink produced in the Park, increase the consumption of locally produced food and encourage an increase in the procurement of local sustainably produced food across the Park.
- Expansion of the local food economy and a decrease in the Park's food carbon footprint.
- An improvement in the health of the Park's residents as well as an increase in the strength and resilience of the Park's communities.