

A low carbon local food economy

Nourish –

Scotland's sustainable food network

Background

- Formed October 2009 at Dunbar gathering:
“Eat more of what we grow, grow more of what we eat”
- National conferences Stirling 2010, Glasgow 2011, QMU 2012
- 1000 people across Scotland signed up on ning site. Board of 9, constituted as Community Interest Company

Our aims, working alongside others,
are to:

Change what we eat:

Change how we farm

Change local food economies

Change local and national government policy

Why food matters

- 25-30% of our carbon footprint
- Largest industry in the world
- Employs 360,000 people in Scotland (1 in 7)
- Food price rises hurt poor people most – poorest 10% spent 17% **more** on food in 2011 than in 2007, and bought 15% **less** fruit and veg
- East Lothian has best climate and land in Scotland

Low carbon food opportunities

- Production – shift back to higher value organic crops, create more productive small holdings, sell through short supply chains
- Adding value – make bread from wheat and sandwiches from bread: make soup and baby food from vegetables
- Local market: Edinburgh spends £1bn a year on food
- Export: create and sell new organic products

Why organic?

- Organic farming on average locks up 29% more carbon in soils
- Organic farming does not use reactive N (1% of all emissions to make), which also reduces N₂O emissions and water quality problems (ENA assessment €70-320bn)
- Organic farming lower yields per hectare, but also lower inputs (excess wheat yields currently goes for bioethanol anyway)
- Organic farms tend to substitute labour for carbon

Small is productive

Many studies have also confirmed the inverse relationship between farm size and productivity per hectare.

Small farmers are characterized by smaller applications of capital but higher use of labour and other family-owned inputs, and a generally higher index of cropping intensity and diversification.

The inverse relationship between farms size and productivity is a powerful rationale for land reform policies, including land redistribution for both efficiency and equity gains.

International Fund for Agricultural Development 2009

One generation back..

- Farms in East Lothian produced wide range of crops including tomatoes and grapes – decline in area of fruit and veg from 3500 acres in 1970s to 1200 acres in 2000
- Dairies declined from 1750 cows in 1950s to 355 in 2000
- 200 smallholdings post-war almost all gone
- Pigs and poultry moved from small mixed operations to a handful of intensive units, turkeys disappeared
- .. A shift from producing food for people to producing commodities for the supply chain – but still supported by around €20m in annual subsidy

One generation forward

- East Lothian could be as famous for its food as its golf courses
- Closed nutrient loops, mixed farms and new agroecological techniques boost yields per acre, while doubling on farm jobs
- QMU becomes food innovation hub for Scotland, teaching and incubating a new generation of right size food entrepreneurs