



Response to the Good Food Nation Bill Consultation

About 2050 Climate Group

2050 Climate Group is a youth-led charity that aims to engage, educate and empower Scotland's young people to take action on climate change. Our current network consists of over 500 Young Leaders across a diverse range of sectors and regions in Scotland. This includes previous and current participants in our Young Leaders Development Programme (YLDP), our Board and volunteers responsible for the operational functions of the organisation.

Our remit is to inspire and support young people to lead initiatives that combat climate change, and this includes giving them a voice in policy-making. We believe it is imperative that Scotland's future leaders are involved in decision-making to take action on climate change now. There is untapped potential in the expertise, skills, and commitment of our generation, which can support the Government in leading Scotland to a low carbon, sustainable and equitable future by the year 2050. We are the ones who have most to lose if climate change is not tackled.

About this response

Our response to this consultation represents the views of our network of young people from within and outside of the organisation. Views were gathered through an online survey (17 responses) and focus group discussions (20 participants), designed and managed by our Policy team. We also produced a [short animated introduction](#) to the issues discussed in the Good Food Nation Consultation, to encourage young people to submit their response to our consultation survey.

We have focused our questions on broader topics connected to the Good Food Nation; for example, we asked young people about their own definitions of the Good Food Nation concept. We also sought their opinion on the areas of priority identified by the Commission, and the relationship between Good Food Nation and climate change. Additionally, we selected questions from the consultation where we believe 2050 Climate Group can add the greatest value and insight, reflecting the views, concerns and hopes of

I

2050 Climate Group

A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Scottish Charity Number SC047206)
c/o Young Scot, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5LZ

contact@2050.scot

young people in Scotland.

In particular, 2050 Climate Group recommends that as part of work on Good Food Nation Legislative Framework the following points should be considered:¹

1. Sustainability / climate change should be included in the meaning and focus of the Good Food Nation. A failure to achieve progress in this area (and in climate change mitigation and adaptation more broadly) will hinder progress in other areas.
2. Ministers should be required to set statutory targets for Scotland's progress towards becoming a Good Food Nation.
3. Businesses above a particular threshold (e.g. revenue, or number of employees) should be required to set out their own Good Food Nation policies. These should explain what actions (both current and planned) that company will take to further the Good Food Nation ambition.

Part I - Building Blocks of Good Food Nation vision

Meaning of Good Food Nation

The majority of our respondents were supportive of the Scottish Government's definition of a Good Food Nation, but a range of suggestions were offered on how this could be improved. The key areas our respondents would like to see highlighted in the vision of a Good Food Nation are: affordability and accessibility; sustainability; importance of local produce; high quality food; and a healthy nation.

Prioritising affordability and accessibility would see good quality food available to all, regardless of income levels. Our respondents understand there is a strong relationship between access to food and high levels of wellbeing and prosperity for the people of Scotland. By ensuring everyone has access to good quality, affordable food, people do not need to worry about the basics of living and can invest their time and energy into fulfilling tasks. Several respondents noted that incorporating a "right to food" in the Bill could enable this to happen.

Another frequently raised aspect of a Good Food Nation is that it must be sustainable. A number of respondents emphasised that this means embedding climate change mitigation and adaptation at the heart of food policy. Linked to this should be an emphasis on

¹ 2050 Climate Group usually avoids campaigning for specific policies as an organisation - these proposals should be seen as the views of the young people we engaged with, rather than policy positions that we as an organisation advocate for.

enhancing natural environments and promoting biodiversity through sustainable agricultural practices.

Many respondents felt that the Bill should give priority to local food systems, which would contribute towards achieving sustainability goals. Focusing on local produce could also have knock-on benefits by improving people's understanding of where their food comes from and giving greater opportunities for people to get involved in community food projects, for example growing their own vegetables. Smaller scale food production was also understood to contribute towards reducing packaging waste, lowering our carbon footprint by reducing time and distance from farm to fork, and increasing employment opportunities in the food and drink sector.

The importance of high quality produce was also ranked highly by our respondents. Participants attending a discussion workshop commented on the impact of the horse meat scandal in 2013 and the need for robust regulation to ensure food is of high quality and producers are transparent about its source. A few respondents also noted their support for the 'sugar tax' and other measures that would place limits on supermarkets and canteens ability to sell food with low nutritional value.

A Good Food Nation was also widely seen by our respondents as prioritising healthy food. Working towards a Good Food Nation would see increasing emphasis placed on increasing the affordability of nutritious foods and teaching people the skills to cook at home. Measures to increase the convenience of accessing nutritious food would play a key role, for example, by incentivising fresh produce to be sold in small corner shops to break up large areas where there is a dearth of fresh, healthy food available, also known as 'food deserts.' More thought needs to be given to how easy and convenient it is for people to access fresh, healthy food options next to where they live.

Other qualities of a Good Food Nation highlighted by respondents to 2050 Climate Group's consultation exercise included the role of food in building connected communities and opportunities to boost national pride in Scottish produce. A number of respondents also raised issues of food waste and the need for a Good Food Nation to tackle this issue.

Achieving Good Food Nation vision - importance of key progress areas

Our respondents were provided with information about the key areas where it is hoped this legislation will make progress: health, social justice, knowledge, environmental sustainability and prosperity. Those taking part in 2050 Climate Group's survey were asked to rank these progress areas in order of importance. While many respondents pointed out

that several of these areas of progress are interlinked, environmental sustainability was felt to be the most important area where the Good Food Nation Bill should lead progress in.

Attendees at our Stirling workshop explained their choice to rank environmental sustainability as the most important, reflecting the fact that degradation of the natural environment is a matter of increasing urgency. If action is not taken to enhance the environmental sustainability of food production, the damage done to ecosystems could undermine Scotland's ability to deliver any progress in the other areas, including increasing health and wellbeing alongside social justice.

The lowest ranked area for progress was prosperity, which was considered the least important factor for the Good Food Nation Bill to address. Rather, our respondents felt it is more important that all individuals and organisations within the food production chain are fairly compensated for their work.

“Climate impact should be at the forefront of decision-making regarding food”

- Comment by a survey respondent

Part II - Comments on proposed legislation on Good Food Nation

Legal requirement on Scottish Ministers and public authorities to prepare statements of policy

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals for a legislative framework that would place a legal requirement on Scottish Ministers and public authorities to prepare statements of policy. However, the respondents also felt that although the transparency and reporting on progress is a key aspect to deliver the ambition of Good Food Nation, the Scottish Ministers should be also responsible for taking action, such as setting targets written in law to measure progress and report against. Furthermore, the respondents believed that allowing the public to input into preparation of the policy statements through public consultations would benefit the process. In addition, some respondents felt that the Good Food Nation Bill should have enough flexibility to accommodate advances in sustainable food production. Any legislation on the topic of food should ensure that it can be amended with time as it is an ever changing sector.

Finally, some of the respondents felt that there should be a statutory body such as a Food Commission or powers should be given to an existing body to oversee the transition to an improved, more streamlined local food system and to hold Ministers or public bodies to account.

Private Sector

“A Good Food Nation without the participation of businesses is not sustainable and it’s an important part that is missing.”

- Comment by a focus group participant

The Good Food Nation ambition can only be achieved with the involvement of all of the stakeholders in Scotland. The majority of respondents felt that businesses not only should be encouraged and enabled to play their part in achieving the Good Food Nation ambition, but also required to take action. There was a wide agreement to introduce a requirement on businesses generating above certain revenue and/or having over a certain employee number threshold to introduce Good Food Nation provisions. Particularly in the case of larger businesses, health and wellbeing of employees and customers (e.g. policies on food in canteens, etc.) should be prioritised even if it may mean lower (shareholder) profits or a slowdown in the economy. Respondents identified that taking care of people’s wellbeing and health can in turn have a positive impact for the businesses such as reduced number of sick leave in the workforce. To help businesses with taking action, incentives or tax breaks can be provided for implementing some of the above practices. An example of this can be the ‘common good economy’ where businesses voluntarily assess workers’ wellbeing as well as that of their supply chains. Based on this, companies can receive a tax incentive for taking this into account and making improvements.

A minority of respondents felt that the encouragement of businesses to produce their Good Food Nation policy would be sufficient, and that an informal disincentive for lack of compliance with Good Food Nation principles should be implemented. There was also a concern that if the Government were to introduce taxation to enforce the requirement, those costs could be passed onto consumers and disadvantage them.

However, overall there was agreement that everyone in Scotland should participate in achieving the ambition of Good Food Nation, and businesses must accordingly play an important part of this transition.

Part III - Climate Change and Social Justice

Climate Change and Good Food Nation

The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that climate change plays a significant role in defining a Good Food Nation. However, we feel that this issue is specifically lacking in the proposals; the term 'climate change' is not even mentioned within the consultation paper.

Good Food Nation provides a great opportunity to prioritise people and environment in our food system. Food's impact on the environment needs to be minimised, and respondents raised concerns around food wastage, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, pollution, animal welfare and pesticide use related to food. Environmental sustainability was often raised as the most important factor at our focus groups and by respondents to our online survey. If no action is taken to address this, it could undermine a lot of the other goals of Good Food Nation.

While climate change could fall under the Bill's wider environmental remit, we feel that due to the urgency of climate change, it needs to be a central part of the proposals.

Climate change, food production, and consumption are inherently linked and food must become more sustainable with regards to climate change. Conversely, climate change has and will continue to have a significant impact on food production and is a very real threat to food security. All of this has a direct impact on how a Good Food Nation is defined, and we could not consider Scotland to be a Good Food Nation unless its food system addresses climate change.

Right to food

There was a mixed response to incorporating the 'right to food' into domestic law by people who engaged with our discussions. While many strongly agreed with this, or felt it was already a given, others required more information about what this actually involved. This suggests there is perhaps a role for government and the third sector to increase public awareness of this concept. Other respondents questioned whether this would be the most

effective way of ensuring the right to food; or if there would be better alternatives, such as tackling inequality through other methods.

The group found this proposal positive in principle. However, some felt that there is a danger that such a right could be over simplified; the right to food needs to consider the *kinds* of food, and the *costs* involved in providing this. We believe that everyone should have access to affordable, healthy, local and tasty food that they understand the provenance of and can make informed dietary and environmental decisions about.

Respondents considered the possibility of introducing a right to grow your own food, for example by giving greater access to allotments in cities. People also raised the issue that we don't allow enough time for food in this country, and some drew comparisons to other food cultures. Examples were given of cultures where people spend more time eating and preparing food socially, and many benefits of this were discussed, such as a healthier relationship with food.

“Nutritious food must be accessible to all. Only when this basic need is met can people build a more thoughtful and equitable economy and society”

- Comment by a survey respondent

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The food that people buy, prepare, eat, and produce is integrally related to many aspects of Scottish people's lives. Furthermore, our discussions were wide-ranging and an agreement was not always reached by participants. As such, drawing any firm conclusions from our discussions with young people on the Good Food Nation is not an easy task - but some common themes and asks do emerge:

- Climate change is the most pressing issue facing Scotland and the planet, and action to mitigate and adapt to this is urgently needed. As such, climate change action should be included within the Good Food Nation Bill. This is because Scotland's food system will not only be affected by climate change, but also has the potential to mitigate against wider climate breakdown. Scotland's food system will inevitably be affected by climate change, and the issues of food security, and what food can viably

be produced in this country, will be exacerbated. However, current food production methods have a large climate impact, and so the Good Food Nation provides an opportunity for Scotland to adopt a more sustainable food system based on local, healthful food.

- Scottish Government Ministers should be required to set out statutory targets on Scotland's progress towards becoming a Good Food Nation. These will drive action forward, and make the Good Food Nation more than a mere ambition. By having specific targets, the Scottish Government can be held to account. This will ensure that the benefits of becoming a Good Food Nation are achieved, rather than just talked about.
- The private sector has a key role to play in the Good Food Nation. This should go beyond recognising those businesses that produce food that makes Scotland famous - companies should be looking out for the welfare of their employees, and acting in a sustainable manner that reduces their impact on climate change. As such, companies (above a certain threshold e.g. revenue, or number of employees) should be required to set out policies that detail how they will contribute towards Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation. Examples of such policies might include improving the quality of food in staff canteens, limiting food sourcing to within a certain radius to reduce food miles, or reporting on (and being accountable to) levels of staff health and wellbeing.