

Last updated: Autumn 2001



FOOD

Objectives

FD100 Everyone has the right to enjoy a balanced, healthy diet. Government should secure this right by adopting a food policy that places emphasis on the health of the consumer. The primary objective of the Green Party food policy is the production of healthy and humanely produced food, with priority given to local production for local needs, and on conservation of the countryside. It will require a high profile publicity campaign to inform everyone how to eat healthily. Administrative and economic changes will be required to ensure that healthy food is available to all.

Policies

A Ministry of Food

FD200 The establishment of a Ministry of Food (incorporating some of the functions of DEFRA) with the primary objective of the production of healthy and humanely produced food, with the emphasis on local production for local needs and conservation of the countryside (see Agriculture policy).

FD203 The Minister of Food to chair a committee of Cabinet colleagues whose support is needed for a coherent national food policy. The committee to include the ministers responsible for the Exchequer, Health, Education and Trade.

FD204 The Ministry of Food to set goals for the quality of the food supply; with short-term aims (5 years) and long-term aims (within 15 years). The Ministry of Food should seek to ensure consumption of more local foods within each region or locality. Liaison with regional and local government and health authorities will therefore be required. Urgent attention to be given to the quality of food for:

- a) pregnant women, nursing mothers, babies, infants and children (standards for school meals to be restored immediately);
- b) patients in hospitals;
- c) those in residential homes;
- d) prison populations.

(The NACNE goals to be used until others are devised)

FD205 Food compositional standards to be restored.

FD206 An immediate ban to be imposed on chemical additives in food likely to be eaten by babies and children under five. The use of all additives to be restricted to those approved by a committee representative of consumers and other interested bodies, but with a clear majority independent of financial interest in the food industry. All additives under a toxicological cloud to be withdrawn immediately, pending a complete review of their safety.

FD207 The progressive reduction of levels of pesticide, drug and hormone residues in food with a view to their eventual elimination.

FD208 Genetically modified food presents significant and unquantified risks to human health and the environment. These outweigh any benefits. We would ban the production or import of any genetically modified food. We define genetically modified food as any:

1. food that is genetically modified or includes genetically modified ingredients; or
2. food that is from genetically modified animals; or
3. food that is from animals that have been given genetically modified feed.

So long as any such food is available in this country, it should be labelled as containing genetically modified ingredients or coming from genetically modified sources.

FD209 Food sampling to be increased, with the appointment of the necessary number of inspectors. Regular sampling of imported food to be established with unacceptable produce being refused entry to the UK.

FD210 A system of standards to be established, inspected and funded for organically grown produce, in co-operation with the Soil Association and organic

Last updated: Autumn 2001

growers. (see CY524 & 'Agriculture' section)

FD211 Production and sale of irradiated food will be banned in the UK except for special medical diets

Processing, Distribution & Retailing

FD212 The production and distribution of basic, healthy foodstuffs is clearly one of the most fundamental tasks of a society. It is therefore important that too much control over this activity does not become centred around a small number of large, powerful companies.

FD213 The dominance of large processing companies and supermarkets in the food retail market is not healthy. It encourages the unnecessary mass transportation of food, through centralising its distribution, and brings about the closure of small, local retailers. It also makes small food producers/growers increasingly reliant on one or two large customers for their livelihood, and this leads to an unacceptable level of control by the processors and supermarkets over the prices paid to producers.

FD214 To meet the objective of local production for local need, local authorities should take steps to safeguard and encourage the local processing, distribution and retailing of local produce. This would include sponsoring co-operative and other shared local facilities to avoid the need to use distant processors, and the setting up of farmers' markets to enable producers to sell direct, as appropriate. It could also include involvement with the distribution of local produce to local retailers,

restaurants, hotels etc. - sometimes subsidising prices, if this was felt necessary in order to protect local food production and jobs therein.

FD215 When dealing with a planning application for a new supermarket, local authorities should take into consideration the expected effect on small, local food retailers and the extent to which the supermarket would reduce the amount of local produce being sold in the area.

Advisory Committees

FD220 There would be strong consumer representation on all government committees concerned with advice, policy, priorities and strategies for food. All their evidence and findings would be published. Proper induction would be provided for new members.

FD221 The work of all government advisors on food and health to be subject to a Freedom of Information Act. A register of advisors' interests to be published annually.

Imports & Exports

FD230 Britain imports and exports similar amounts of identical foodstuffs. Such unnecessary transportation wastes resources and creates pollution. It also undermines attempts to make local economies self-reliant.

FD231 Green policies address this by positively encouraging local production for local need. In addition, financial measures taken to ensure that air transport costs fully reflects its environmental impact would make im-

porting and exporting of identical products less economically viable (see TR540-544). Import duties would also be levied on imported goods where necessary, in order to ensure that their prices reflect the ecological impact of their production and transportation. (see EC786)

FD232 Where food is imported, account should be taken of the ethical and political considerations of importing food from countries where the local people do not have enough to eat. We would only enter into trade where it will benefit the people of the country concerned. (see IP240s)

Education

FD300 An independent and adequately funded Health Education Council to be formed. Its first priority will be to publicise, by all available means, the known dangers to health incurred by an unhealthy diet, and how to avoid them by returning to eating natural whole foods.

FD301 Legislation to be introduced to ensure that all food has fully informative labelling with actual percentages of main nutrients and all additives and all countries of origin.

FD302 We would encourage the teaching of vegetarian and vegan nutrition systems in schools and, at greater depth, to medical students.

FD303 Food manufacturers' literature to be discouraged in schools, clinics and maternity hospitals, implementing World Health Organisation guidelines.

FD304 Vegetarian and vegan choices would be introduced to

Last updated: Autumn 2001

all school meals and other public institutions' menus.

Scientific Research

FD400 Research into food, health and disease should have adequate funds, which would be disbursed by the Health Education Council.

FD401 The incidence of diseases believed to be caused by current eating habits and the health of vulnerable groups in the population to be monitored by the Ministry of Food.

FD402 Food producers to be given incentives to produce free range and organic food.

FD403 Research into organic methods of food production will be funded.