

POLICY

ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.

Vote Green Party 

Food

Safe Healthy food for all - produced locally, fairly and without cruelty

Recent food and farming scares - salmonella in eggs and chicken, BSE and foot and mouth - have made us all concerned about food safety. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pesticide residues and chemical additives threaten to damage our health and wreck ecosystems. Animals suffer from the cruelties of factory farming and current levels of meat consumption are unsustainable. Obesity is on the rise in the UK, while people go hungry in countries growing 'cash crops' for the West.

These trends must be reversed. Safe, good quality food, produced by sustainable and humane farming methods should be available for all. This cannot be achieved if priority is given to the profits of agribusinesses, supermarkets and large food manufacturers.

The Green Party will put consumers, animal welfare and the environment before the interests of big business. We need more organic, local production - to reduce wasteful transportation, provide local employment, and strengthen links between producers and consumers.

What needs to be done?

- Food production must 'go organic' - with incentives to increase organic production.
- Production and import of GM food should be banned including GM animal feed.
- Pesticide, antibiotic and other drug residues in food must be progressively eliminated.
- Unnecessary long distance trade in food should be discouraged.
- Local food should be promoted.
- Free trade should be replaced with fair trade.
- Factory farming, industrial animal rearing systems and live exports should be banned.
- Vegetarian and vegan alternatives should be more available on school menus and in hospitals and other public places
- Additives suspected of causing illhealth or used in children's food should be banned.
- Healthy food should be promoted: more fresh food and less sugar, salt and saturated fat.

I'd like to eat organic food but it's too expensive.

If there was more organic farming, and if the Government was serious about supporting it, the cost would come down. But we are also paying hidden costs for intensively produced food - through cleaning up the pollution, ill health, and damage to the countryside and our environment.

There isn't enough land in this country to grow all our food locally.

We could grow a lot more than we do. While we may need to import some food, we certainly don't need to import large quantities of the same food we export. This food swapping makes no sense and should be stopped.

Doesn't the Green Party want us all to be vegetarians or even vegans?

Vegetarian or vegan food should be more readily available. Whilst we would introduce laws to ensure far better protection of farm animals, we regard meat eating as a matter for individual choice. However, current levels of meat consumption are unsustainable - cutting down on meat is beneficial even if people do not want to become vegetarian.

What's wrong with genetically modified ingredients (GMOs) pesticides and additives? I've probably eaten lots and I'm fine.

Many pesticides and additives have been shown to be harmful, especially for vulnerable groups like the very young and elderly and we simply don't know what the cumulative effects might be. For GMOs we do not know what the long term effects are. The risks to health and the environment are simply too great.

Organic food production cannot possibly feed the whole world. Isn't GM the answer?

Most food produced in the developing world is already organic. It's multinationals selling fertilisers and genetically modified seeds for massive profits which threaten traditional, local food security. With less greed and meat consumption in the west, nobody need go hungry.

Won't people in the developing world lose money if we don't buy their agricultural products?

Most imported food actually comes from developed countries. Trade with the developing world in products we cannot produce should continue - but to benefit the people in those countries it must be on the basis of 'fair trade'.

To join the Green Party visit:
www.greenparty.org.uk/join

Find other policy information at policy.greenparty.org.uk
1a Waterlow Road, London. N19 5NJ. Telephone: 020 7272 4474

Published in October 2006 by Jim Killock, 1a Waterlow Road, London. N19 5NJ. Printed by and on behalf of the Green Party.