Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

Local Food: The Facts

The economics of local food

- local food sales in some 750 towns across England through independent outlets (including social enterprises and cooperatives) could currently be **£2.7 billion a year**
- these local food outlets could be supporting **over 103,000 jobs** (FT and PT), of which **over 61,000** could be attributed directly to local food sales.
- money spent in local food outlets networks will be re-circulated within the local economy for longer: it could be contributing **£6.75 billion** a year to local economies (assuming a local multiplier effect of 2.5 based on NEF research)
- **pound for pound of spending in smaller independent 'local food' outlets supports three times the number of jobs than at outlets of national grocery chains**: outlets selling significant to high percentages (above 25% of sales) of local food support on average **one job for every £46,000 of annual turnover; by comparison at three national chains one job is supported per £138,000 to £144,000** of annual turnover.
- Local food outlets offer markets for SME producers (**69%** were micro-businesses and **28%** small businesses)

Why we shop for local food

- nationally, across England local food outlets could serve we estimate **16.3 million customers a week**
- one **fifth of shoppers use independent stores for all or part of their main shopping**; these stores account for 60% of extra or 'top up ' shopping visits
- the main reasons for using smaller independent stores were: quality/freshness/taste (46%), specific products (32%) and local produce (19%)
- of shoppers interviewed their main reasons for buying local food were: supporting local farmers and producers (56%); quality (54%); supporting the local economy (51%); taste (41%) ; and food miles (34%), value for money (19%) and seasonal food (19%).

Local food and the environment

- The concept of 'food miles' resonates with shoppers and businesses: **34% of shoppers gave reducing food miles** as a main reason to buy local food
- CPRE's Local food web research show producers across many locations clustered within **10-15 miles of outlets.**
- local food needs less packaging than goods needing protection from long-distance transport
- local food supports the viability of independent outlets which keep buildings in use; especially in historic market towns this maintains character, individuality and sensitive scale of use

- local food webs underpin local diversity in the scale and type of farming in the area from livestock to cheese to fruit cropping
- local food webs support genetic diversity in traditional and rare breeds, heirloom and heritage varieties not suited to large scale processing and distribution systems.

Out of town supermarkets

- national supermarket chains dominate grocery spending (**77% of all main shopping trips**)
- Food and groceries account for at least 50p in every £1 of retail spending (IGD).
- shoppers gave convenience (44%), proximity/location (36%) and price (24%) as the main reasons they use supermarkets
- to scale up, stores have moved out of town growing from 300 superstores and hypermarkets in 1980, 700+ in 1990 to almost 1500 in 2007
- The number is growing still and in May 2012, applications submitted or permission had been granted for a reported 44 million square foot- 80% out of town - of new supermarkets development (CBRE).

Grocery stores/supermarkets are categorised by their size:

- traditional retail/convenience stores – under 3,000 square feet
- supermarkets – 3,000 to 25,000 square feet, selling a broad range of grocery items
- superstores – over 25,000 square feet, including non-grocery items
- hypermarkets – over 60,000 square feet.

According to the IGD there are 88,441 grocery stores with a combined sales area of over 200 million square feet, comprising:

- 9,192 hypermarkets, superstores and supermarkets
- 48,056 convenience stores
- 31,193 traditional retailers

The effect of supermarkets

- Traditional specialist stores have shrunk from around **120,000 in the 1950s to around 18,000 in the late 2000s** (Competition Commission) **.**
- Town centre vacancy rates average **14% nationally**, though in certain towns much higher (Local Data Company) .
- The decline in spending on the high street as a percentage of retail spending illustrates the long-term nature of the problem: from **49.4% in 2000 to 42.5% in 2011**, to a projected 39.8% by 2014 (Local Data Company).
- Research on the impact of 93 edge-of-town supermarkets on jobs showed that **over a four-year period, there had been a net loss of 276 jobs in a 10-mile radius of each of the supermarkets**, equivalent to a **national total loss of over 25,000 jobs (National Retail Planning Forum, 1998)**. This study did not include florists, clothes shops and newsagents, suggesting far greater actual jobs losses. There is an urgent need for more such research to inform planning decisions.

How much local food are small outlets selling?

- For butchers the average (mean) of local food sold was 68%, bakeries 61%, fishmongers 55% and greengrocers 39%.
- delicatessens and wholefood stores were also selling significant percentages of local food (46% and 20% respectively)

How much 'local' food are supermarkets selling?

(based on website analysis of Asda, Morrison, Sainsbury's, Tesco)

Supermarket Definitions of local:

- **Asda** – 'We define local products as those that are made locally, grown locally and reared locally; are a local taste or delicacy and recognised by customers as local'; but strong indications are Asda uses a 30-mile definition
- **Morrisons** – no definition
- **Sainsbury's** – no definition
- **Tesco** – 'Local lines are those produced and sold within a county or neighbouring county in England, or within the country in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Supermarket sales of 'local' food:

- **Asda** – declared turnover of local food is £1 billion (2001-2011), so averaging £100 million a year or 0.6% on total grocery turnover of around £16 billion but would be a higher share of food sales alone
- **Morrisons** – no data
- **Sainsbury's** – no data
- **Tesco** – declared sales of local products £1 billion in 2011, up from £850 million in 2009; equivalent to we estimate 3.5% of grocery turnover; this would be higher as share of food sales alone but lower total value as Tesco use national boundaries for 'local' sales in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Notes to Editors on footnoting:

All of these facts and statistics are sourced from the CPRE report: 'From field to fork: The value of England's local food webs', June 2012.Unless shown otherwise, they are based on shopper and business surveys across 19 locations for Mapping Local Food Webs project. Please consult the CPRE report for full footnoting.