

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice





## Contents

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<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Action on sustainable diets framework – 30 second summary	5
<b>Introduction: the need for action on sustainable diets</b>	<b>7</b>
Impacts and definition: why care?	7
Current definitions	9
Answering a need: a blueprint for sustainable diets in action	10
Sustainable diets: some useful rules of thumb	11
<b>The business case for sustainable diets</b>	<b>12</b>
Sustainable meal commitments drive growth	12
Meat reduction a massive trend	13
Harnessing Generation Z	14
The increasing importance of transparency and trust	14
How to use this guide: make best practice standard practice	15
<b>Action on sustainable diets infographic</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1. Menus and ingredients</b>	<b>18</b>
1.1 Think plant based	19
1.2 Think health	21
1.3 Think recipes and taste	22
1.4 Think menu design	24
1.5 Think robust and seasonal	25
1.6 Think product utilisation	25
1.7 Think skills	26
<b>2. Supply chain</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 Think sustainable production	28
2.2 Think science and target hotspots	30
2.3 Think collaboration	30
2.4 Think certification and sales	32
2.5 Think chain of custody	33
2.6 Think worker welfare	33
2.7 Think local and international	34
2.8 Think big	35
<b>3. Waste</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Think measurement	38
3.2 Think portion sizes	38
3.3 Think nose to tail and root to shoot	40
3.4 Think quality not quantity	40
<b>4. Education and communication</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Think language and marketing	41
4.2 Think fast	42
4.3 Think small	42
4.4 Think customers	43
4.5 Think nudges	43
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Research description</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>About Footprint Intelligence</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>47</b>



## Executive summary

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### The need:

The idea of sustainable diets that combine food that is healthy for both people and planet is slowly but surely building traction and is a key emerging trend. Veggie dishes and meat-light menus are proliferating across foodservice with operators across the spectrum from Wetherspoon and Pret A Manger to Sodexo and Vacherin increasing these types of more planet-friendly offerings. There is also the emergence of a new type of consumer – the flexitarian – who makes vegetables, not meat, the mainstay of their diet and who wants delicious food that meets these criteria when eating out.

Food production and distribution, including growing crops and raising livestock, manufacturing fertilizer, and storing, transporting and refrigerating food and land use change, is responsible for between a fifth and a third of global emissions<sup>1</sup>. Animal products are in the spotlight because these typically have a much larger environmental footprint than plant based foods and other protein sources<sup>2,3,4</sup>. The sheer scale of the impact of food means that the food industry has a significant role and responsibility in helping to meet the commitments of the Paris Accord, which aims to limit average global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels<sup>5</sup>. Shifting towards sustainable diets is therefore a business and moral imperative, but it is one that provides a significant commercial opportunity.

### The opportunity:

The business case for sustainable diets is becoming increasingly clear. It can be summarised as follows:



**Sustainable diets = commercial growth.** Businesses with sustainable commitments grow up to four times faster than those without<sup>6, 7</sup>.



**Major industry trend.** Health and sustainability repeatedly take the top spots, in multiple guises, in trends reports, forecasting and horizon-scanning exercises<sup>9, 10, 11</sup>. Embrace it or be left behind.



**Consumers will pay more.** Consumers across regions, income brackets and categories repeatedly report a willingness to pay more for sustainable products or brands<sup>8</sup>.



**Generation Z expect action.** Seen as another key emerging trend in food<sup>12</sup>, Generation Z demand businesses act responsibly<sup>13, 14</sup>. They are important because Gen Z make up a large proportion of foodservice's young workforce and will soon represent 40% of the buying public<sup>15</sup>.



**Vital to transparency and trust.** Increasing expectations of supply chain transparency and responsibility<sup>16</sup> means food impacts from field to fork are now seen as part of foodservice's responsibility<sup>17</sup>.



**Strengthen and protect brand.** Consumers expect action on reducing emissions<sup>18</sup>. Mitigating the impacts of the food served will soon be seen as an integral part of foodservice's sustainability agenda.

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

## The Framework:

The Action on Sustainable Diets framework creates a common roadmap to help foodservice plan and set parameters over what sustainable diets mean for the sector and how they can be achieved. It sets out the key areas that a foodservice business needs to consider to incorporate the concept of sustainable meals into its offering.

It aims to help businesses identify priorities and the areas that are most relevant and most actionable within its business that can be tackled first. A longer-term strategy can then be scoped out to tackle the remaining issues. Stretching targets are key – if every business worked to be the best in its class, best practice would become standard practice. This would drive further innovation, facilitate collaboration and drive an industry-wide paradigm shift towards sustainable diets.

## Action on sustainable diets framework - 30 second summary



### Menus and ingredients

- 1.1 Think plant based. Meat typically produces proportionately bigger impacts so base dishes around plants instead.
- 1.2 Think health. Sell on health because consumers want help to be healthy and wellbeing is an on-trend opportunity.
- 1.3 Think recipes and taste. Identify the ingredients with the biggest impacts in bestselling dishes, then tackle them whilst keeping taste front and centre.
- 1.4 Think menu design. Guide consumers towards sustainable choices through positioning, labelling, descriptions and price promotions.
- 1.5 Think robust and seasonal. There will be less waste, fewer food miles and seasonality brings excitement back to menus.
- 1.6 Think product utilisation. It saves money, resources and increases kitchen efficiencies.
- 1.7 Think skills. Train staff on sustainable diets – it can be a powerful motivator – and create systems which enable chefs to design creative menus.



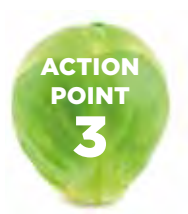
### Supply chain

- 2.1 Think sustainable production. Identify the top 10 bestsellers and analyse the supply chain to tackle their biggest impacts.
- 2.2 Think science and target hotspots. When making changes to reduce impacts, use science and robust tools to identify and target top offenders and alternative solutions. This will help to ensure sustainable food offerings are just that.
- 2.3 Think collaboration. Work with suppliers, NGOs and industry to share knowledge and target impacts.
- 2.4 Think certification and sales. Seek out foods produced to higher ethical and environmental standards, and go for certified systems where possible. This provides certainty and has been shown to boost sales.

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

- 2.5 Think chain of custody. Make sure every link in the supply chain can demonstrate it is operating to the standards expected.
- 2.6 Think worker welfare. Make sure workers are well treated, at home and internationally.
- 2.7 Think local and international. Both have benefits, so rely on research to choose the most sustainable overall – and this can change throughout the year, for example, when local products have to be grown in fossil fuel heated greenhouses out of season.
- 2.8 Think big. Thinking big can sometimes make the impossible possible, because of economies of scale or the benefits of combined effort.



## Waste

- 3.1 Think measurement. Introduce waste audits – they prompt awareness of food waste that drives spontaneous waste-reducing behaviours.
- 3.2 Think portion sizes. Save on food costs, waste and overconsumption by ensuring portion sizes are appropriate.
- 3.3 Think nose to tail and root to shoot. Make sure each cut and trimming is being utilised where possible to save waste both in the kitchen and supply chain.
- 3.4 Think quality not quantity. The illusion of abundance drives waste – consider reviewing the offer with more careful portioning and offer provisioning to reflect issues such as the time of day.



## Education and communication

- 4.1 Think language and marketing. Make benefits easy to understand and use multipronged marketing strategies to capture different demographics.
- 4.2 Think fast. Play to people's instinctive thinking to educate them about sustainable diets intuitively.
- 4.3 Think small. Focus on one component at a time – sustainability is complex but messages do not need to be.
- 4.4 Think customers. Understand what customers care about, and consider enlisting them to help solve sustainability challenges.
- 4.5 Think nudges. Use nudges, which make sustainable choices easier and more normal, such as positioning or reducing plate sizes, to drive more sustainable behaviours.

# Introduction: the need for action on sustainable diets

The idea of sustainable meals that combine food that is healthy for both people and planet is slowly but surely building traction and is a key emerging trend. From Harvester, Mitchells & Butlers and Wetherspoon to Pret A Manger, Wagamama, Carluccio's, ASK and Busaba, across foodservice, vegetarian and vegan offerings are being launched and ranges and menus expanded. The Peas Please initiative, which aims to get everyone from growers and producers to high street operators and government playing their part in getting more vegetables grown and onto the plate, is also gaining momentum. For example, Greggs, PwC/BaxterStorey, Bidfood, Sodexo, Nestlé UK and the Soil Association's Out to Lunch campaign have all made measurable commitments to increase the vegetable portions served. Some operators, such as Sodexo and Vacherin, have gone even further to create 'sustainable menus' which are intended to be better for people and planet.

Industry insiders across foodservice agree that the idea of sustainable diets and menus is such a powerful and important concept that it will eventually become mainstream – this was a sentiment repeatedly confirmed in the in-depth interviews and other research undertaken for this report (see research description box for more details). Recent research by the WWF also stressed the key role that foodservice must play in shifting people towards less meat and more plant-based foods by rejigging their meal offers to include vegan and vegetarian dishes that are not pizza and pasta based<sup>19</sup>. Typically healthier, sustainable diets tie in to strong health and wellbeing trends, providing a significant opportunity – both commercially and in improving public health.

Yet, until now, confusion has reigned over what a sustainable diet means in practice, and how foodservice can adopt it. This research project aims to answer that need by creating such a framework: a best practice guideline for implementing sustainable diets in foodservice.

## Impacts and definition: why care?



Food production and distribution, along with deforestation and land-use change for agriculture, are responsible for up to 29% of global greenhouse gas emissions and for 30% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>20</sup>. Food production is also immensely thirsty – using 69% of all fresh water extracted for human needs globally<sup>21</sup>. Almost 30% of fish stocks were overexploited or depleted by 2009, demonstrating that the capacity for fish stocks to function has been severely compromised<sup>22</sup>. The commitments of the Paris Accord, which aims to limit average global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels<sup>23</sup>, require that the impacts from food, farming and production systems are addressed urgently.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

In general, plant-based foods require less energy and fewer natural resources to produce than animal products. Many of the changes to the 2016 UK Eatwell Guide<sup>24</sup>, including the dairy slice becoming smaller, referencing dairy alternatives and the protein section becoming more focused on beans and pulses, were driven in part by sustainability considerations. The WWF calculates that shifting from current diets to eating its 'Livewell diet' – a diet designed to be both healthy and sustainable whilst remaining culturally acceptable – would decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 25%<sup>25</sup>. Another recent study which analysed 39 peer-reviewed articles identified "eating a plant-based diet" as one of the four actions that would have the greatest impact on an individual's greenhouse gas emissions<sup>26</sup>.

There is also considerable evidence that sustainable diets – which by definition are diets that contain less meat, especially red meat – are healthier. For example, a study estimated both the health and climate change impacts of a global switch to diets that rely less on meat and more on fruit and vegetables. It estimated that such a switch could save up to 8 million lives by 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds, and lead to healthcare-related savings and avoided climate damages of \$1.5 trillion (US)<sup>27</sup>.

This range of impacts has led to the concept of sustainable food and diets that aim to be healthy for both people and planet. However, there is a general lack of consensus in foodservice over what these terms mean, and in practice they are used and defined very differently across foodservice.

For some in foodservice, sustainable diets or food means food that is vegetable based or that is locally sourced or seasonal. For others, it means working with their supply chain on improving impacts or ethical sourcing, such as serving MSC fish, RSPCA Assured meat or fairly-traded tea or coffee.

Others view a sustainable offering through an operational lens, focusing on elements such as energy and water usage at foodservice sites rather than the ingredients on the plate or in the food package. Operational issues must of course underpin any concept of a sustainable diet, but they are not the focus of this guide.

Instead, with food impacts accounting for a third of global emissions, being careful about what is chosen to go on the plate/in the package must be central to any foodservice provider who is serious about sustainability.

Definitions of 'sustainable diets' tend to focus more on consumption (i.e. the food that is on the plate) and nutrition, whilst definitions of 'sustainable foods' focus more on the supply chain and sustainable production methods. However, the two definitions are beginning to merge as the concept of sustainable foods and diets mature.

***"There is some shared understanding of what we mean by sustainable food. But for foodservice providers, a sustainable food plan that helps them to work out where they should concentrate their efforts would be a really helpful tool."***

**Sue Dibb**, Executive Director, Eating Better



## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

This research project argues for a blended definition for foodservice, using a definition of sustainable diets and menus that encompasses the ingredients on the plate whilst recognising the importance of supply chain and production methods as well as certain key operational impacts, such as waste.

The UK buying public spent 43.6% of their total food, drink and catering expenditure – £87.6 billion a year – on catering services<sup>28</sup>. This means that taking responsibility for impacts and embracing sustainability is foodservice's responsibility.

### Current definitions

Despite the confusion over how terms are used in practice, some excellent definitions do exist. The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO) summarises 'sustainable diets' as

***“Diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimising natural and human resources.”***<sup>29</sup>

This is the definition of sustainable diets being used in this report.

For foodservice, when focussing on the ingredients on the plate, the Government's 2016 Eatwell guide is a good starting point. It's estimated that the average person can reduce their individual lifestyle emissions by 45% just by eating according to these guidelines. The WWF's Livewell plate also provides a really useable blueprint for a sustainable diet (see box The six WWF Livewell principles). Using the UK Government's Eatwell Plate (of 2011) as a base, it is close to current diets, costs about the same and is nutritionally balanced<sup>30</sup>. Aimed primarily at helping the public change their consumption habits, it is estimated that shifting to the Livewell diet would decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 25%. The principles are practicable and workable for foodservice in helping to provide guidelines for ingredients. Sodexo's "Green & Lean" meals project, which is based on the principles, shows that greener menus can be delicious, popular, cost neutral and prompt high levels of customer satisfaction and engagement<sup>31</sup>.

***When it comes to ingredients on a plate, sustainable meals can be summarised as more plants, less but higher quality meat and less processed food.***

Menus of Change, an initiative from the Culinary Institute of America, have also created a workable and usable set of criteria that provide some really good rules of thumb when looking at ways to reduce the impact of food on the plate (see Menus of Change principles infographic, page 11). This has also been included to provide guidance.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

However, whilst these guidelines exist, the industry has not yet established a shared accepted definition of what sustainable food means in foodservice, and what best practice could look like. Within foodservice, even those who claim to understand the term personally note that it is still a concept poorly understood by their own organisations.

### Answering a need: a blueprint for sustainable diets in action

Action on sustainable diets is designed to give foodservice a clear picture of what best practice could look like by creating a sustainable diet framework – a key recommendation of the Food Ethics Council's report *Catering for Sustainability*<sup>32</sup>.

Whilst any framing of sustainable diets is likely to cause debate because of what has been put in or left out, through detailed industry research and assessment of other definitions, we have worked hard to create a complementary and considered set of practical guidelines for implementing sustainable diets in foodservice.

***“Sustainable diets are best viewed through the lens of sustainable nutrition with the aim of ensuring that the way we grow, produce, consume, eat and distribute food is done within environmental limits that produce healthy nutritious foodstuffs and enhance the livelihoods of those producers who produce our food.”***

**Mark Driscoll**, Head of Sustainable Food Program, Forum for the Future



## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Sustainable diets: some useful rules of thumb

#### Clear and simple

The WWF's Livewell<sup>33</sup> definition is a hugely helpful rule of thumb that defines six clear principles for the food on a plate. The Livewell Principles are designed to show how sustainable diets can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the EU food supply chain by at least 25% by 2020 – whilst being healthy, nutritious and affordable. They are summarised as:

**1. Eat more plants.**

Enjoy vegetables and wholegrains

**2. Eat a variety of foods**

Have a colourful plate

**3. Waste less food**

One third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted

**4. Moderate your meat consumption, red and white**

Enjoy other sources of proteins such as peas, beans and nuts

**5. Buy food that meets a credible certified standard**

Consider MSC, free-range and fair trade

**6. Eat fewer foods high in fat, salt and sugar**

Keep food such as cakes, sweets and chocolate as well as cured meat, fries and crisps to an occasional treat. Choose water, avoid sugary drinks and remember that 150ml juices only count as one of your five a day, however much you drink.

### Menus of Change infographic





# The business case for sustainable diets

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### Sustainable meal commitments drive growth

The business case for sustainable diets is becoming increasingly clear as sustainable businesses have been repeatedly shown to be growing faster and having stronger brand value with consumers. This business case is only expected to grow as consumers become increasingly aware of the link between food and its impacts.

For example, a Neilson report<sup>34</sup> found that sales of consumer goods from brands that have a clear commitment to sustainability have grown at least four times faster than those that do not – those with demonstrated commitments to sustainability grew 4% globally compared to 1% for those without. In the survey, 66% of respondents also said they were willing to pay a premium for more sustainable goods. This effect was found across regions, income brackets and categories, but rose to nearly three quarters (73%) for respondents under 20<sup>35</sup>.

Another example is Unilever. Its 'Sustainable Living' brands grew over 50% faster than the rest of the business in 2016<sup>36</sup>. Unilever's research also found that a third of consumers are "choosing to buy from brands that are doing social or environmental good". It estimated this market represents a potential opportunity of €966 billion<sup>37</sup>.

Sustainability and particular elements of sustainability, such as fewer animal proteins and less waste, have been identified in multiple reports and surveys as top emerging food trends<sup>38</sup>. For example, according to research by the National Restaurant Association, sustainability and health featured in almost all of the Top 10 Concept Trends in 2017 from hyper-local sourcing, to natural ingredients/clean menus, environmental sustainability, food waste reduction and nutrition<sup>39</sup>. Healthy food was identified as the second biggest trend in hospitality in the last three years by the British Hospitality Association, with meat-free eating singled out as a growing food trend<sup>40</sup>.

A Forbes trends report also puts sustainable diets in the top 10. It acknowledged that while the debate rages around exactly what constitutes a sustainable meal and how offers can be improved, "consumers have already weighed in and are making their food decisions based on where and how their foods are made, grown, raised and by whom... Food ideologies [have] become more important as people realize the foods that could disappear over the next decades like avocados, coffee, lobsters and even chocolate."<sup>41</sup>

***"The food we eat has a massive impact on the planet and our health, but sustainable diets also make great business sense by ensuring security of supply and meeting changing customer demand."***

**Paul Lumley**, Brand and Communications Manager, Nestlé Professional



## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Meat reduction a massive trend

As outlined above, sustainable food is a key emerging trend and appears consistently in horizon scanning exercises in its own right as well as in the mantle of other trends such as health, flexitarian, vegetarian and vegan. This is one reason why so many brands that have not typically been associated with taking a strong environmental or health stance are sitting up and taking notice, and changing their offers.

Meat reduction has been driven by the emergence of a new consumer group of 'flexitarians' who are actively trying to reduce their consumption of meat, especially red meat. According to Kantar Worldpanel, this category of British consumer has grown by 2.2 million people in the past two years, meaning almost half of the population go vegetarian part-time by ditching meat at least two days a week<sup>42</sup>.

"There are huge benefits for businesses in offering sustainable diets," says Mark Driscoll, Head of Sustainable Food Programme, Forum for the Future. "This includes the financial benefits from increased brand reputation and engagement with customers, to building long term resilience in their supply chain. Unless foodservice does this, many of them might not have a business in the future."

"Consumer engagement is a massive benefit," confided one industry insider working for a large high street operator. "It also really helps drive workforce engagement. To be seen as a responsible business who is trying to look at all parts of its business from menus and ingredients to supply chain, waste, health, education, and animal and worker welfare, can only drive repeat business and security and loyalty from a customer perspective."

Other, less obviously related trends also lean towards sustainable diets and these should be exploited to their full potential. Street food, for example, is a major new trend<sup>43</sup> that industry insiders note lends itself to meat reduction with its focus on composite style dishes that are less based around a big chunk of meat.

***"Flexitarianism is a massive trend and foodservice has to meet that need or lose out. Moving towards serving more sustainable meals is also our obligation as responsible businesses."***

**Michael Hickman**, Foodservice Director, Compass Group UK & Ireland

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Harnessing Generation Z

Soon to represent 40% of the buying public<sup>44</sup>, the Generation Z demographic represents another key emerging trend in food<sup>45</sup>. In this research, Generation Z were repeatedly recognised by foodservice insiders as key to their business both in the workforce and as consumers.

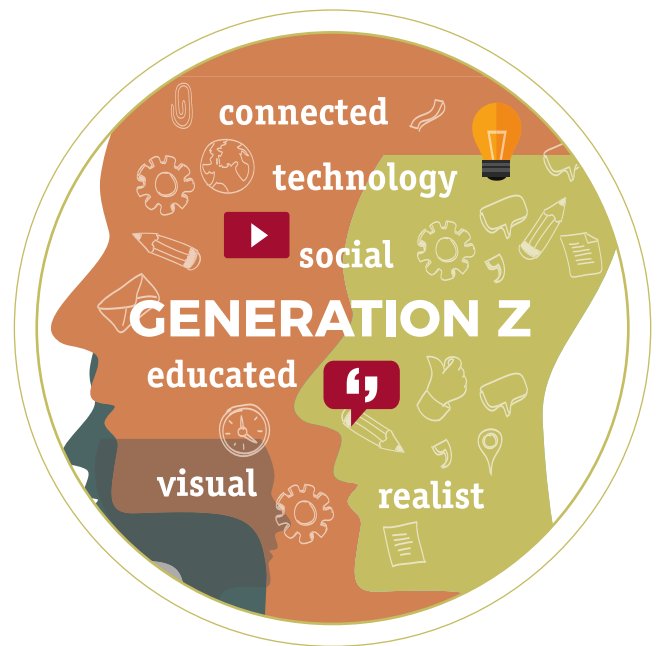
Generation Z (loosely defined as those born after 1995 and before 2010) care passionately about the environment and their influence in foodservice will only grow as more of Generation Z grow up and enter employment and increase their spending power. And, with foodservice relying on a workforce that is predominately under 25, Generation Z will make up a high proportion of staff.

The hyper-connected Generation Z have a social conscience – 89% are personally concerned about the environment – and they're prepared to take action to combat it<sup>46</sup>. Generation Z want to spend their money responsibly, and to work in a responsible business.

They expect companies to make “doing good” a central part of their business<sup>47</sup>. 45% said they would rank working for a company that helps make the world a better place as important as salary<sup>48</sup>. During this research, one high street operator who had recently undertaken an internal employee survey revealed that sustainability concerns were one of their Generation Z staff's top priorities.

“There are higher expectations generally when it comes to younger generations,” comments Pamela Maclean, Food Development Manager, Bidfood. “They are far more aware and better equipped with sustainable knowledge than those over 35... It's a natural instinct that they have because their sustainability education started at school at a much younger age.”

“The business and brand benefits of sustainability are really clear and can be tangible,” agrees Simon Galkoff, Procurement Director, Casual Dining Group. “Taking care and being responsible in the way we source our food and drink reinforces the trust our customers have in our brands and enables our employees to talk with pride about the way we do business.”



***“There will always be a place for indulgence but the general trend is towards healthier eating. The generation that’s currently at school is very aware of healthy eating and they are tomorrow’s consumer.”***

**Louise Pilkington, Marketing Director, Compass Group UK and Ireland**

## The increasing importance of transparency and trust

Nielsen research found that brand trust topped the list of sustainability factors that influence purchasing for nearly two out of every three (62%) consumers globally<sup>49</sup>. Traceability and transparency are key – particularly with the digital and tech revolution.

Consumers now expect and want to know where their food comes from. Throughout this research, industry experts repeatedly noted how, increasingly, consumers want to know about animal welfare and labour standards, and the impacts that the products they buy have had on the environment. They want to know what a brand is doing, not only in its own operations, but in its supply chain. Foodservice businesses must know where and how they source, and they need to be transparent about how they are working with suppliers.

“The first thing to have is clear visibility of your entire supply chain, not just your direct supplier – to know that your South American beef hasn’t been fed on soya that is linked to deforestation, for example,” advises Nick Hughes, Food Sustainability Advisor, WWF-UK.

## How to use this guide: make best practice standard practice

The **Action on Sustainable Diets** framework creates a common roadmap for sustainable diets to help foodservice plan and set parameters for the sector. It sets out the key areas that a business needs to consider to incorporate the concept of sustainable meals into its offering. Similar frameworks, such as those provided by the School Food Plan, have been found to be hugely helpful in guiding and transforming industry.

## Identify clear goals, achieve them and move on

Sustainable diets is a hugely complex subject which this framework has tried to distill and simplify into a workable and useful tool to help guide foodservice in its efforts to embrace sustainable diets. It sets out a clear description of what sustainable diets best practice looks like. However, it is clear that most organisations will not be able to tackle everything immediately.

This framework should help in identifying priorities and the areas that are most relevant and most actionable for each business that can be tackled first and achieved, whilst giving no excuse not to scope out a longer-term strategy to tackle the rest of the issues. Stretching targets are key; if every business worked to be best in its class, best practice will become standard practice. The industry can then work together to achieve even more.

“There is always a risk in having a best in class ambition and being the standard bearer for any given sector,” comments Helen Lo, Independent Consultant, Casual Dining Group. “It is far easier to wait for others to go first, to follow and to see how things land, particularly in the current climate of uncertainty. However as we know, we need to balance that risk with understanding and finding the opportunities to do what is right for the business and society as a whole. Casual Dining Group is to be commended for what it has achieved in two years, and whilst there is still a long way to go on its sustainability journey, it is turning what are barriers today into positive ambitions for the future. It is very exciting to be part of this journey in making a real difference.”

Setting clear short term and longer term goals makes meaningful success much more likely. As one high street operator advised, “If you try to do everything – you’ll do nothing. Identify clear goals and focus on those goals. When we started our sustainable working party, we looked at everything and did bits and bobs here and there and achieved very little. We’ve learned it is much more effective to set a clear scope of vision, achieve it and then move on.”

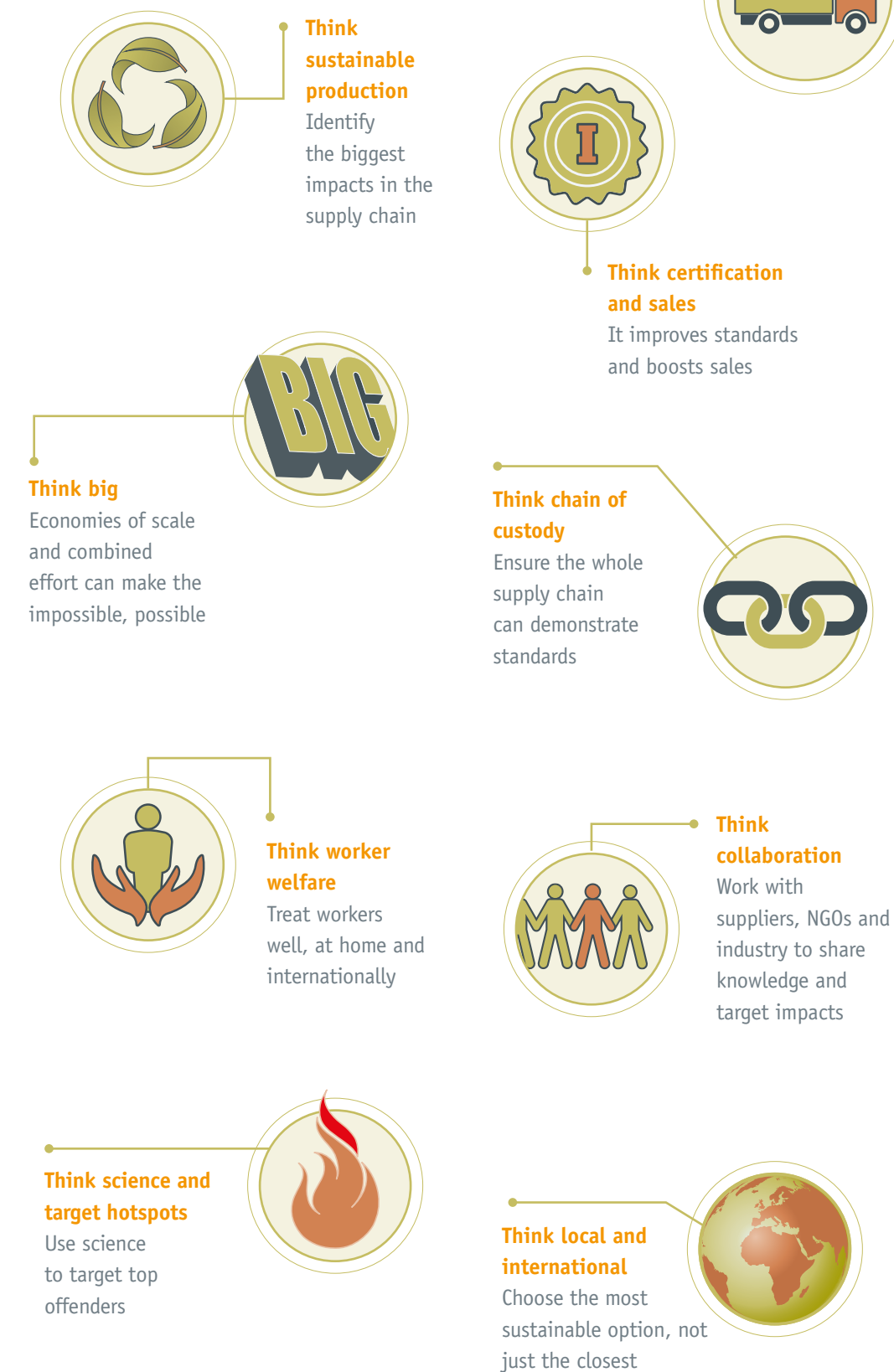
# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS INFOGRAPHIC

Pin it up, post it, share it and **ACT** on it

## Action point 1. Menus and ingredients



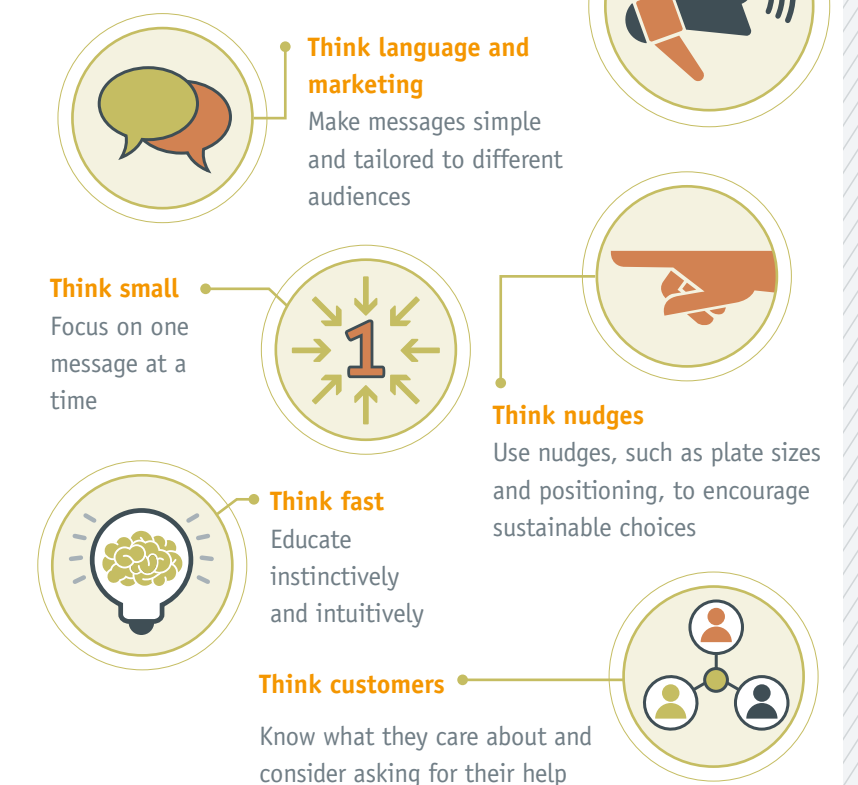
## Action point 2. Supply Chain



## Action point 3. Waste



## Action point 4. Education and communication





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## Menus and ingredients



Any discussion around sustainable diets has to start with an assessment of the food chosen to go on the plate because different foods have wildly different impacts. Recipes and menus must be designed to minimise negative impacts.

“There are complexities and trade-offs,” comments Nick Hughes, Food Sustainability Advisor, WWF-UK. “But it is important to establish starting principles because the wider parameters for sustainable diets are clear. We know that the average plant-based food will have a lower carbon impact than animal protein, for example. The first step is accepting such principles exist and adopting them. Then you can drill down deeper. The complexities are not an excuse for not tackling the broader issues.”

### Pushing up standards

There are already some really helpful tools out there. One is the Soil Association’s Food for Life Catering Mark. This has helped to provide a framework to guide industry towards providing healthier and more sustainable food in the public sector; creating a race to the top by creating a mark perceived as a badge of quality.

By setting out clear, accessible criteria, the mark helps guide operators towards better food provision. It may have further to go to ensure its caterers serve fully sustainable food, but the mark is hugely valuable in raising awareness and in driving change in the right direction.

### Holistic thinking

The University of Brighton has worked hard to incorporate sustainability into its offering. “Sustainability will always feature in how we develop our offering – it is part of our psyche when we develop menus,” explains Julie Barker, director of accommodation and hospitality, University of Brighton. This ranges from using local suppliers and farmers to using alternatives to meat. Teams regularly use plant-based proteins, lentils, pulses, nuts and beans, and have used ground insects in pastry to increase protein in quiches.

“We’ve always got a range of veggie dishes on, and we know that with smart marketing we can encourage people to choose the healthier, more sustainable dishes. We continue to focus on increasing the range and variety of plant based foods we offer and promote climate friendly menu choices in response to our student feedback.”

## 1.1 Think plant based



Livestock is responsible for around 14.5% of the world's human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, and 30% of the world's biodiversity loss<sup>50</sup>. Livestock also consumes 8% of the world's fresh water<sup>51</sup>, is responsible for 70% of agricultural land use, and 30% of the land on the planet<sup>52</sup>.

In general, feeding plants to animals to feed people is a hugely inefficient way to get calories. Plant-based foods tend to require less energy and fewer natural resources to produce than animal products, and there is considerable evidence that diets which contain less meat, especially red meat, are healthier. For example, a study which estimated both the health and climate change impacts of a global switch to diets that rely less on meat and more on fruit and vegetables could save up to 8 million lives by 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds, and lead to healthcare-related savings and avoided climate damages of \$1.5 trillion (US)<sup>53</sup>. These facts are why the shift towards plant-based food is a central plank of sustainable diets.

Fortunately, providing plant-focussed food offers a massive business opportunity.

44% of the British population now identify themselves as 'flexitarians' who are actively trying to reduce their consumption of meat<sup>54</sup>, whilst more than half (56%) think meat is not a necessary ingredient to a good meal.

Luckily, plant-based options do not have to be complicated or made from novel ingredients – good quality vegetables and pulses, prepared well, that taste great, is all that is required. "People bring out the insects," comments Bojana Bajzelj, Technical Specialist in International Food Sustainability, WRAP, "but what about the humble lentil? We look for sexy, trendy technical solutions but we're not looking at the old-fashioned solutions that are right in front of us."

"There are a number of large studies that have shown a strong public willingness to reduce/cut out red meat for environmental reasons," comments Helen Harwatt, Sustainability Research Specialist. "And as we are seeing the level of knowledge and education go up among consumers, there is a rising expectation of, 'Where can I buy these lower impact products?' Business will have to change eventually through customer demand and there is now a huge opportunity to get ahead of that curve and create really good publicity out of the fact that the business is being responsible and changing industry trends."

However, whilst many operators have set themselves health-related targets and are working to incorporate more alternative proteins on their menus, very few have set themselves specific targets for reducing the amount of meat on the menu. Insiders admit, though, that targets are beginning to be considered. Whilst creating too many targets can make systems unworkably rigid and potentially lead to unintended consequences, it is likely that those who find a way to create workable meat-reduction targets will benefit as increasingly flexitarian and environmentally consumers reward them for their efforts.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Meaty veg

There are also lots of efforts to find good plant based alternatives. For example, Forum for the Future's Protein Challenge 2040<sup>55</sup> is working hard to explore viable alternative protein options in a way that is affordable, healthy and good for the environment.

The increased market in plant-based alternatives is also helping to open up menus and options. For example, as part of the Menu's for Change programme, some US universities have moved from 100% meat to blended burger mixes (or analogues as they are often termed) without causing issues in canteens because the quality of alternatives are now so good. For example, UC Riverside's "Earth 'N' Turf" burger sales have matched those of its cheeseburger. In fact, in some taste tests, another meat-free burger, the Beyond Meat Beyond Burger, was rated as tasting more like a beef burger than the actual beef burger. Chicken analogues can also be amongst the best for flavour profiles and texture. Meat alternatives do not have to be a compromise – there are already products out there that work.

Trying to keep consumers happy with meat-mimicking alternatives can sometimes be seen as an overly processed potential distraction when effort should be directed at creating delicious foods that are desirable in their own right, and this is a valid point. However, there is an argument that analogues can act "like a gateway to opening people up to more plant based options," according to Helen Harwatt, Sustainability Research Specialist. "So, initially they might want something that resembles a beef burger, but a beef analogue might open them up to trying something much less processed like a bean burger down the line."

***The average beef burger (150g) requires about 2,350 litres of water to produce, compared to 158 litres for a soy burger<sup>56</sup>.***

### Future football food

Forest Green Rovers turned football stereotypes upside down when it ditched meat pies, sausages and burgers to launch a meat-free and environmentally sustainable menu for all its clients. Offering locally-sourced, vegan food is part of the Club's strategy to make it Britain's most sustainable football club.

### Swapping mushrooms for meat

Harvard University Dining Services replaced some of the meat in 10 beef-based dishes with mushrooms. This reduced the saturated fat by 31% and calories by 20%. Swapping to the mushroom blend in one meatloaf recipe was also estimated to lower the dish's carbon footprint by the equivalent of taking a car off the road for six months. Apparently, "student response has been so enthusiastic that the meat/mushroom chilli is now a daily lunch feature, and a quarter of all burgers are blended turkey with brown rice and vegetables".

## 1.2 Think health



The statistics around obesity are terrifying, with 63% of UK adults, and around one third of children, overweight or obese<sup>57</sup>. And obesity is a life sentence – it doubles the chances of premature death, whilst increasing the risk of a host of life-style related diseases, from cancer to heart disease and depression<sup>58</sup>.

Health is a major component of sustainable diets because sustainable diets focus on eating behaviours that promote good health such as lower meat consumption, increased vegetable and wholegrain uptake and less processed food. For example, diets that comply with nutritional recommendations produce a 17% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 8 million Quality-Adjusted Life Years, mostly from coronary heart disease reductions<sup>59</sup>.

“There has been a growing realisation that we can’t have a sustainable population that is plagued by problems with diet and ill health,” notes Ruth Westcott, Co-ordinator of the Sustainable Fish Cities Campaign at Sustain. “A few years ago, a distinction would have been made between a healthy diet and a sustainable diet, but now a more holistic definition of sustainable diets is being adopted which brings health on board. For example, the sustainable diet has shifted to include a focus on cutting down sugar, fat and salt.”

The fact that sustainable meals tend to be healthier meals is a major factor driving the sustainable diets trend. Health has become a key business opportunity in foodservice<sup>60</sup>, consistently appearing in trends forecasts, often alongside sustainability concerns such as increased demand for natural and “less processed food”<sup>61</sup> and environmental concerns. The food landscape has also shifted, and consumers want help to be healthier. In the 2015 Grocery Eye, an annual independent study of supermarket shoppers that identifies perceptions towards purchasing and consuming food and drink as well as non-food products, roughly half of the respondents had tried to lose weight and 46% reported attempts to be healthier in the previous year<sup>62</sup>.

“In recent years, we have seen an increase in clients wanting to know what we could do to make their workforce more healthy,” notes Michael Hickman, Foodservice Director, Compass Group UK & Ireland. “Now that expectation is becoming the norm and there is a growing change in the understanding of the impact of healthy eating on their workforce. Most big companies understand that productivity, sickness, healthy diet, nutrition and education are all linked and they want us to help their workforce or pupils or customers to be healthier and more productive. Additionally, there are more millennials in the workforce now and they have a greater understanding of diet and higher expectations around what they should get in the workplace.

“More and more, clients are asking, ‘what are you going to do?’ It’s about food, the offer, but also the education. They are saying, ‘we expect you to do the food – but how else are you going to help my people?’ They are increasingly beginning to devolve more of the responsibility to the food service provider.”

“We know that health is important to consumers,” agrees Sue Dibb, Executive Director, Eating Better. “It rates more highly than sustainability. But sustainability is far more complex for people to understand and they want companies to take that responsibility for them.

“All companies need to have sustainability and health on their radar. And sometimes there is a bit of a stalemate when companies feel customers aren’t demanding it enough, and so they won’t do it unless they feel there is demand. But what they find is that when they take the initiative and put healthier options on the menu, then that creates demand, and food companies are very good at knowing how to create customer demand.”



## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Health on the go

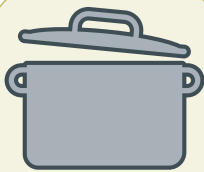
Health and strong values also drive sales. Sodexo UK & Ireland saw a 20% uplift in sales after it swapped high calorie, low nutritional value vending on its Southampton Solent University campus with health-conscious, locally-sourced, lower calorie organic options such as juices, popcorn and baked vegetable crisps.

***“Focussing on healthier food is a really great place to start. ‘Healthy’ and ‘sustainable’ foods have much more in common than that which divides them.”***

**Bojana Bajzelj**, Technical Specialist in International Food Sustainability, WRAP

### 1.3 Think recipes and taste

1.3



Healthier and sustainable dishes must be focussed on taste first – no matter how great its credentials, if a dish does not sound, look and taste delicious, it will not be a success. According to a Footprint Intelligence & Nestlé Professional report on recipe reformulation and innovation, in order for new dishes and products to be successful, taste “must be kept at the heart of both development and branding.”<sup>63</sup>

#### **But when redesigning menus for sustainability, where to start?**

Menus of Change have created a fairly detailed set of criteria that provide some good rules of thumb when looking at ways to reduce the impact of food on the plate. This is summarised in an infographic, but more detail on each element is given on its website (see Menus of Change principles infographic on page 11).

***“Taste is paramount in developing new recipes and dishes – you are not going to sell it as healthier and more sustainable if it is not absolutely delicious. This can get forgotten but it is perfectly possible to make delicious sustainable dishes.”***

**Paul Lumley**, Brand & Communications Lead, Nestlé Professional

Sodexo and WWF’s work on defining sustainable meal principles is another great resource which gives foodservice a clear and evidenced-based set of principles to follow when creating/renovating sustainable food offers (see boxes Green & Lean and Sodexo’s sustainable meal principles).

To start the process of moving towards more sustainable meals, begin by analysing the environmental and health impacts of the business’s top 10 bestsellers. It is then possible to look at where the emissions and impacts are from those meals. This will identify where the best opportunities are to reduce impacts.

For more detailed and business specific analysis, life cycle analysis (LCA) is a powerful tool in identifying hotspots and comparing products and systems. However, specially commissioned LCAs can be beyond many budgets. Fortunately, there are already plenty of life cycle analyses and datasets available in the public domain that assess different production systems and products. This means that decisions to change menus can be based on good evidence.

### Green & Lean

Sodexo UK & Ireland and WWF have shown that sustainable meals can be healthier and keep customers happy without costing more. Starting with small changes to popular, well-loved dishes such as lasagne and Lancashire hot pot, Sodexo and WWF developed principles to improve the nutritional content and reduce the environmental impact. This was done by swapping out refined grains for whole grains, adding more vegetables and pulses to dishes, and reducing added salt and sugar. The Green & Lean menu has now been extended to over 30 dishes and has proved very popular with pupils and clients.

It has also had an impact on the chefs. “For my chefs, I’ve noticed that Green & Lean is having a ripple effect across everything they do,” explains Tom Allen, Food Development Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland. “For example, for a recent hospitality event, they put braised shin of beef on the menu. Normally, it would just be the shin, but instead they adapted the Green & Lean principles and incorporated lots of grated vegetables with the wine and stock. This really helped with the flavour of course, but it means using less overall meat too and more vegetables and it didn’t break the bank.”

### Sodexo’s sustainable meal principles

- **Balanced – made up from two thirds vegetables, pulses and grains**

Meat is no more than a third of each meal

- **Sourced responsibly**

Fruits and vegetables are seasonal

Meat and fish are certified and sustainable

- **Crafted with healthier ingredients**

All grains are whole grains

Sugar and salt are added sparingly

- **Commercially viable**

Kitchen and plate waste are minimised

Sustainable meals come at no extra cost

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

## 1.4 Think menu design



Menu design can play an important role in guiding consumers towards healthier (and more sustainable) options through price promotions, positioning, labeling and descriptions, according to a recent Footprint Intelligence/Compass report<sup>64</sup>.

The report concluded that:

**Descriptors sell dishes.** Just one word can turn an overlooked dish into a best seller so make sustainable items the ‘Chef’s special’. The type of words that work well include sensory, geographic, nostalgic or brand names.

**Be careful with the word ‘healthy’.** It can put some consumers off. The same can be said of ‘vegetarian’ or ‘vegan’, so where appropriate, using allowable taste related words (e.g. fresh, crisp) that imply healthy and sustainable without being off-putting, can work better.

**Logos, icons and boxes** can be used to draw attention to dishes.

**Healthy (and sustainable) dishes** must feature in promotions. This can ensure healthy options are good value and are well promoted. But remember, different populations may respond to different offers.

### Take the green food challenge

Psychology can play a big part in whether people think dishes taste good, with healthy, vegetarian, vegan and sustainable potentially carrying an association of inferior flavour with some staff and customers<sup>65</sup>.

Doing “Pepsi” style challenges where healthier/greener dishes, such as a burger made with 50:50 veggie protein and meat, are tasted alongside their standard alternatives, can help give both staff and customers’ confidence in their quality, texture and flavour to ensure sustainable recipes are embraced.

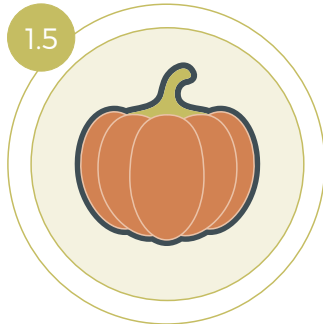
*“Putting vegetable options at the top of the menu and meat at the bottom is really refreshing to see. Small changes can really impact on our perceptions as customers, and on our purchasing behaviour.”*

**Sue Dibb**, Executive Director, Eating Better

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

## 1.5 Think robust and seasonal



When it comes to fruits and vegetables and reducing impacts, one of the best rules of thumb is to buy foods that are robust and seasonal. This is because if a product is robust – for example, it is a hardier variety or a less fragile/perishable product, it is more likely to have been grown in an open versus a hot house environment, or less likely to be damaged in transit, thereby reducing the emissions related to its production.

It is also less likely to be perishable (and therefore prone to waste) and will be more likely to have been transported more efficiently, such as by ship, road or rail.

## 1.6 Think product utilisation



Why buy multiple product lines when one can do? As one high street operator noted, looking at menus to improve product utilisation by looking at how one item can serve multiple menu items, can save vast amounts of wastage and cost, because fewer product lines means less ends up getting wasted as spoilage. Plus, product utilisation means less time and money invested in auditing and setting up new suppliers, and less complexity in the kitchen too.

For example, conscious of keeping children's meals appropriately sized, one high street operator looked at increasing its listing to include a small chicken breast for the children's menu. But the technical team realised that, in reality, adding the smaller breast would just cause extra cost because of the costs attributed to setting up a new line and, potentially, a new supplier, whilst creating an additional product line that if underutilised, could end up as spoilage. The solution was simple and pragmatic but just as effective – taking an adult portion chicken breast and cutting it in two.

### Health and sustainability hand in hand

When Dine Catering reformulated their meals to up the vegetable content to make them healthier, the side benefit was that it also made them greener.

"We did a massive reformulation recently as we wanted to increase the amount of vegetables to make our dishes healthier," explains Roz Witney, Nutritionist, Dine Contract Catering. "This meant we ended up reducing a lot of meat in the recipes, but it was from a perspective that people wouldn't notice because our aim was to create healthy, delicious food. We do a lot of composite meals, casseroles, stir-fry etc., and not a lot of 'meat and two veg' so it wasn't a huge problem really. It's a good thing really that we've moved away from meat as the main event. We don't need 200g of meat per serving – it is not necessary, for health or the planet."



## 1.7 Think skills



Incorporating sustainability training and knowledge into induction training is a simple way to ensure that staff understand what sustainability means, as well as how their jobs relate to company targets and contribute to overall societal goals. This highlights the difference they can make individually and can be a hugely powerful (and frequently underestimated) motivator according to industry insiders.

Sustainability is like an onion with many layers of understanding and complexity. The magnitude and multi-faceted nature of the conversation can make issues a challenge to understand and make it hard to know which is the right choice. Not everyone in foodservice can be a sustainability expert. The trick is to give people the knowledge to allow them to have an impact in the areas that they can change, without overwhelming them.

“We’ve incorporated mandatory sustainability training into our inductions, and we really try to ensure that staff understand the difference they can make individually,” comments Zoe Stennett-Cox, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Lead, Vacherin. “It is amazing how much of a difference it makes.”

Giving chefs the tools and allowing them flexibility in designing dishes can also be really helpful, especially when sustainable meals have so much scope for imagination. Creating interfaces where chefs can upload their recipes to be tested and approved has been shown to be a great way to foster creativity whilst keeping brand standards and control. For example, Dine Contract Catering recently introduced an interface that allowed chefs to upload their own recipes. As long as recipes pass the cook off test and are approved by the nutrition team, they will be added to the recipe bank.

There are also some great free resources to help to up-skill chefs. For example, The Humane Society offers free “plants-based culinary workshops” for chefs. The one or two day workshops are careful to talk about sustainable food in the language of delicious, creative and satiating food, and aim to equip chefs with the skills and the training to invent tasty and imaginative vegetarian and vegan dishes. The courses include showcasing some novel new ingredients, such as nutritional yeast, and techniques such as smoking or barbecuing, that can really enhance flavour and provide an all-important umami element of a delicious (and moreish) savoury taste.

“You can’t expect chefs to suddenly come up with a sustainable menu,” comments Claudia Tarry, Forward Food Campaign Manager, Humane Society International UK, “and customers typically don’t set out to eat ‘sustainable food’, they go out to enjoy a great meal. We have launched a culinary programme that showcases techniques and products to inspire and enable chefs to add exceptional plant-based – in other words meat-and-dairy-free – dishes to their menus that are healthy and sustainable, but equally importantly, really delicious. We need to break down the barriers and overcome the preconceptions around plant-based food. There has been a lot of interest so far and even the few chefs we’ve worked with who started off being a bit sceptical came away really enthused.”

Another concept which may help drive creativity and vision is asking chefs to imagine what a future plate of food should look like, and what their role is in making it a reality. The Sustainable Restaurant Association has teamed up with celebrity chefs to launch a #futureplate campaign which it hopes will drive action and provide inspiration.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

Vacherin, who have launched a range of sustainable menus called “A Greener Choice”, agree. The contract caterer has tried to get chefs on board whilst inspiring creativity by moving from prescriptive recipes to providing a set of five sustainable meal criteria that chefs can follow. If chefs meet at least three of the five, a dish can qualify as “A Greener Choice.” The standard includes: no more than 3oz of meat or fish; no more than 30% animal proteins; look for plant-based alternatives; at least 35% seasonal and locally sourced fruit and vegetables; ethical supply chains; and processed food free.

Chefs are often drawn to the profession because of its creativity<sup>66</sup>, but can be frustrated in some commercial kitchens that are tightly controlled. Sustainability provides a really tangible creative challenge that chefs often embrace and find highly motivating.

Sustainability education must also start at catering college. “We teach our students to develop relationships with suppliers and to understand provenance,” explains Paul Jervis, Programme Manager for Professional Chefs Diploma, Westminster Kingsway College. “We take them to fish and vegetable markets and talk to them about seasonality. We get students involved in menu writing, and get them doing the research to find out what is available and why. This fosters curiosity to learn for themselves, and sparks creativity and creates anticipation – for example, asparagus becomes a big deal again – and then there is the excitement and motivation that comes with that.”

## 2

## Supply chain



All tomatoes are not equal. Their environmental impact can vary hugely depending on where and how they are grown and transported, ranging from water and irrigation techniques to chemical inputs and worker welfare. For example, Nestlé Professional worked with its Spanish tomato growers to implement under soil watering systems that use 30% less water than sprinkler systems. Knowing the impacts of important ingredients and working with the supply chain to manage them is therefore vital.

It is also becoming the norm, increasingly moving from being best practice to standard practice. This is partly because in a post horse-gate era, consumers expect foodservice to take responsibility for their supply chain.

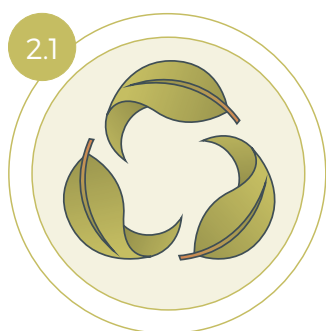
The retail sector has already used its considerably larger buying power to force change, so piggyback on these efforts, leverage this best practice and chose suppliers who have already had to make improvements to supply into retail. Those who supply into foodservice need to understand that foodservice has the same expectations as well.

“The consumer wants to do the right thing,” explains Pamela Maclean, Food Development Manager, Bidfood. “The expectation now is that people expect food to be ethically sourced and traceable. In the past, it was something that was ‘nice to do’ but now it is a necessity because customers have an expectation that it is already happening.”

***“Sustainability for Casual Dining Group means a security of supply. If we want to be in business in 50 years’ time, we have to have ensure that our supply of raw materials and ingredients, as well environmental resources, are assured.”***

**Simon Galkoff**, Procurement Director, Casual Dining Group

### 2.1 Think sustainable production



Sustainable diets cannot be separated from production. Whilst the journey can start with putting more vegetables and alternative proteins on the plate, it cannot stop there. A truly sustainable diet strategy must work towards tackling supply chain impacts, even if this goal has to be part of a longer-term strategy.

“As a general rule, we do need to shift to less meat and fewer dairy products, and more whole grains, tubers, beans, pulses, legumes and fruits,” argues Dr Tara Garnett, Founder, Food Climate Research Network. “But we do need to be careful to ensure these products are also grown in the most sustainable way possible.”

Foodservice should be wary of including vegetables and fruits that have been grown in a way that depletes the soils, or that involves problematic pesticide or water use, because they cannot be called “a sustainable food”.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

***“What is good for society is good for business. Sustainable farming allows us to continue the supply of quality ingredients that we serve to our customers.”***

**Paul Lumley**, Brand & Communications Lead, Nestlé Professional

Attempting to consider every impact of the ingredients on the plate can make the challenge of switching to sustainable diets seem overwhelming, and potentially put organisations off even attempting to try. This is why the Eatwell, Livewell and Menus of Change principles are so useful as rules of thumb to help guide decisions about what are likely to be more sustainable choices.

Analysing the top 10 menu bestsellers can identify where the opportunities to reduce impacts in the supply chain are. Life cycle analysis (LCA) can also help in identifying hotspots and comparing products and systems. Fortunately, this does not have to be done from scratch – there are already plenty of life cycle analysis and datasets available in the public domain that assess different production systems and products.

***“The environmental cost of food is largely determined by how it is produced. The best farms and ranches protect and restore natural systems through effective management practices, such as choosing crops well-suited for their local growing conditions, minimizing use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, and avoiding the use of groundwater for irrigation.”*** <sup>67</sup>

**Menus of Change**

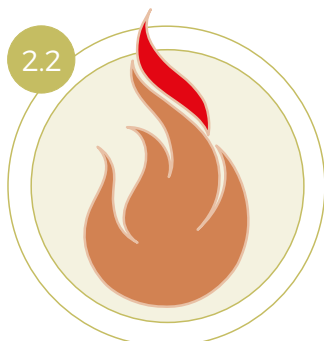
Menus of Change have also created a simple rule of thumb when looking at supply chain impacts. This is complemented by a fairly detailed set of criteria that provide guidance when looking at ways to reduce the impact of food on the plate.

While supply chain impacts can be hugely complex, it is crucial to remember that all efforts are worthwhile. It's also worth remembering in a time and money constrained industry that when targeting effort, it can actually be easier to pick foods that naturally have a lower impact rather than trying to make higher impact foods have a lower impact.

***“Rather than trying to make something slightly less bad, just choose the thing that is already available and which is better in the first place.”***

**Helen Harwatt**, Sustainability Research Specialist

## 2.2 Think science and target hotspots



When trying to make diets more sustainable, it's important to ensure that changes are based on evidence and science instead of public opinion or assumed knowledge as this can sometimes be flawed.

Analysing operations to identify the particular hotspots in a business is key to ensuring that effort is targeted in the right area. It is crucial though that any work done on changing the supply chain is built from science and science-based targets.

"Understand what your impacts are now," advises Daniel Vennard, Global Program Resources Director, World Resources Institute, "and then do what the science says you should do. Changes shouldn't be incremental – that is not good enough. In the UK, we need to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 to meet the commitments of the UK's Climate Change Act. There are some areas where the science is conclusive, for example on the emissions and health impacts of red meat. So act in this area first."

The WRI's *Food Loss and Waste Standard*<sup>68</sup> is a really useful tool in this area. It enables organisations to account for and report in a credible, practical and internationally consistent manner on how much food loss and waste is created and to identify where it occurs. This enables the targeting of efforts to reduce it.

Sedex is another useful resource. A global not-for-profit membership organisation, it is the world's largest collaborative platform for sharing responsible sourcing data on supply chains. The Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA) is also one of the most widely used ethical audit formats in the world. It allows suppliers to conduct one audit which can be shared with multiple customers, rather than having a different audit conducted for each customer. The SMETA methodology uses the ETI code and local law as the measurement tool.

Bord Bia's 'Origin Green' is another good tool. This nation-wide sustainability programme allows every level of the supply chain in the food and drinks industry to set and achieve measurable sustainability targets.

Using smart hand-held technology, the auditors gather data on elements such as cattle farmers' fertiliser use and the length of the grazing season. By identifying that he could keep his cows outdoors for an extra 10 days, one farmer was able to make a cost saving and reduce the amount of slurry in his sheds. The programme provides advice and support to enable the producers to implement practical and realistic targets and recognises those who are making improvements in their sustainable practises.

## 2.3 Think collaboration



Engaging with the supply chain, and committing to providing a market for their products if suppliers invest in making changes, is crucial. But pragmatism is also required. Expectations must be balanced with business capabilities including cost, capacity, availability and quality, all the way through the supply chain. The time and effort required to change things is no excuse to shirk responsibilities – but production systems do require time to adapt.

External organisations such as NGOs can also be helpful and can bring with them enormous expertise and knowledge, especially when businesses may not have the



## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

resources or the expert knowledge. NGO involvement can also make it easier to get internal buy-in and makes efforts more powerful and persuasive to clients. They often have powerful tools and forums too, such as WRAP's Courtauld 2025<sup>69</sup>, the WRI's Food Loss Standard and the WWF's Water Risk Filter<sup>70</sup>. Bidfood's Plate2planet.co.uk is another useful portal that brings the supply chain together to share and solve sustainability challenges.

Sodexo admits that its collaboration with the WWF was not only helpful with the practicalities of developing the sustainable meal offering itself and ensuring that decisions were made on evidence, but also, having a well-respected partner created traction within the businesses which also engaged and empowered management.

"It's about being in possession of facts and knowing where your risks exist and collaborating with fellow companies," says Nick Hughes, Food Sustainability Advisor, WWF-UK. "This should be a pre-competitive conversation that is taking place around issues such as water use, waste, deforestation, antibiotic use etc. Businesses shouldn't have to go it alone and there are forums and tools that they can use."

NGOs also play an important role in highlighting areas and businesses where more should be done.

### Getting its chickens in a row

To help improve standards for broiler chickens, Casual Dining Group partnered with Compassion in World Farming to establish a commitment to source 100% free range eggs on whole shell and liquid eggs across all its menus by 2020.

"Working closely with external organisations, such as NGOs, allows us to benefit from their breadth of expertise and knowledge," explains Aaron Day, Technical Manager, Casual Dining Group. "Working with Compassion, we will be able to review in detail issues such as stocking density, animal husbandry and antibiotics use. Compassion is engaging with companies who supply into Casual Dining Group, and asking questions on what higher welfare standards are achievable in three years, and five? What would be the cost implications, where would the chicken be sourced from? This means that together, the group can scope out a long-term strategy to improve standards and that is mutually beneficial for all involved."



### 2.4 Think certification and sales



Seek out foods produced to higher ethical and environmental standards, and go for certified systems where possible. This is especially important for products like fish, where ensuring a sustainable supply is paramount, but complicated without a framework such as the MSC, which can clearly identify fish that are endangered or depleted due to overfishing and destructive fishing practices.

Operators note that certification schemes and ethical marks boost sales because they help to provide certainty and having a recognised logo means that commitments can be promoted much more widely and with greater fanfare. Some also noted that the additional cost of certification is usually negligible compared to the cost difference between the “more sustainable” and standard product.

‘The jump [in price] is from colony to free range,’ explained one high street operator. ‘The extra cost for RSPCA Assured is minimal, but having that logo means that now we can shout about it.’

Sustainable food definitions often have minimum animal welfare requirements. Whilst some set this bar at Red Tractor standards, other organisations, such as Sustain, argue that a minimum standard should be set at RSPCA Assured or organic. Where this is not possible, it is worthwhile to develop a relationship with the farmer or producer, even if they do not meet those standards, as this provides a clearer understanding of how meat products are produced, and a greater ability to influence supply chain practices.

#### Valuable sales hook

Certification can also boost sales – for example, strong sales of organic and RSPCA-certified products helped ethical food and drink sales grow by 5.3% between 2014 & 2015, despite a 0.9% decline in the value of the overall UK food & drink market<sup>71</sup>. This is likely to be because certification schemes, such as RSPCA Assured, MSC, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance and Soil Association Organic, provide assurance that certain standards are being adhered to, and that expectations are being met. They also provide a shorthand which enables foodservice to communicate complicated messages and concepts simply to consumers<sup>72</sup>.

#### Welfare versus emissions

One of the big issues with raising welfare standards is that, in some cases, higher welfare standards can lead to higher emissions per gram of animal product. This can potentially create a conflict where businesses have to decide whether to prioritise welfare or emissions. One way to negotiate trade offs, suggests Tara Garnett, Founder, Food Climate Research Network, is to use a smaller quantity of meat, but make it higher quality. So, for example, if you set a “carbon budget” of meat-related emissions per dish, this could be translated into a certain weight of free range instead of a potentially higher weight of conventional chicken.

When it comes to raising welfare standards, a species by species approach can be beneficial. For example, for fish, industry and NGOs have worked together well to provide a sustainable fish framework through the MSC. For fish, the mantra has to be “avoid the worst, promote the best, improve the rest.”

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

*“The conversation in foodservice needs to be around using less beef and lamb because their impacts dwarf those of other food products. After that, any other conversation about improving welfare is a nice conversation to have, but red meat reduction should be the priority.”*

**Daniel Vennard**, Global Program Resources Director, World Resources Institute

## 2.5 Think chain of custody



To ensure full supply chain transparency and guarantees, the supply chain must have a full chain of custody. That is, it must have ethical trading tracing at every point from source to supply, with all the relevant regulations, certificates, training and policies. So contact the accreditation provider to access the full chain of custody.

“We have found that some sustainable meal suppliers do not have full chain of custody,” explains Lydia Stratton, Corporate Manager at RSPCA Assured. “They provide the producer’s certificate as proof of purchase, however, there may be several companies in the supply chain between the producer and the company making ethical claims. For RSPCA Assured, a full chain of custody is required and suppliers must have their own certificate and be audited by us. This is why we have developed a relationship with BRC who are supporting our traceability efforts and requesting evidence of any claims that material is RSPCA Assured.”

## 2.6 Think worker welfare



Worker welfare is also a key component of the social justice element of sustainable diets. But to ensure workers are well treated, businesses need to understand where to focus efforts. Strategy consultants can help businesses to understand which of the commodities they buy or countries they source from are at the highest risk of incidents of issues like modern slavery, an issue which continues to rise in prominence after the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act of 2015.

Supporting global farmers and suppliers is very important, but workers closer to home should also be well treated. “We talk about fair trade,” says Martina Jensen, Development Lead, The Sustainable Restaurant Association, “but what happens here in UK hospitality can be pretty poor too – people can be being underpaid and treated badly so it’s important to check that UK (and European) workers are also treated fairly.”

The Living Wage Foundation standard can be a good benchmark for fair pay but organisations must ensure such standards are being applied equally across the business. Fair tipping policies must also be in place.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

The industry agrees that the Modern Slavery Act has been hugely effective at ensuring robust policies are in place in the foodservice supply chain, meaning that something that has become second nature to retail is now being replicated in foodservice.

Smaller operators and independent foodservice companies may be lagging behind on this one, but the increased transparency and standards within foodservice are another outcome of the horse-gate scandal<sup>73</sup>.

Strategy consultants can help to identify commodities that point to risk in the supply chain. Working with strategy consultants helped Compass Group UK and Ireland to identify salad, fruits, seafood (especially prawns), tea, coffee and cocoa as commodities that were at the highest risk of incidents of modern slavery in its own supply chain<sup>74</sup>. It also allowed the group to focus attention on the products it buys large volumes of, such as staff uniforms and linens, and disposable items like paper cups and plastic cutlery. Another risk area they have identified is agency labour.

This has allowed the company to consolidate its supply base to create better visibility; and to focus on certified products like Good Aquaculture Practices for Fish Farming (GAP-FF) fish or Rainforest Alliance coffee.

Joining Sedex allows the company to see audit data on its suppliers, whilst also conducting audits of its own. As a result, Compass is better able to monitor and report on any issues in its supply chain. It can then work quickly to respond and remedy them.

***“There is such high turnover in the foodservice industry, but sustainability and sustainable menus can really help with worker retention. Increasingly, workers want to work for companies who share their own values – and who can be seen to be doing good.”***

**Ruth Westcott**, Sustainable Fish Cities Campaign Coordinator, Sustain

### 2.7 Think local and international



While a local focus might feature highly in many people’s interpretation of what “sustainable food” means, the term is fraught with confusion with little clarity over what local actually means. Is it five miles or 50? Or is it regional or national? Does a local grocer count when the produce may not be local? Why is local better? Is it always more sustainable?

Take an example. A local tomato might have been grown in a fossil fuel heated glasshouse. This means that the emissions associated with its production could exceed that of a tomato shipped in from further afield. Any discussion of local food must therefore incorporate a clear definition of what exactly is meant by the term and how criteria can be met. Reducing food miles and supporting local economies are clearly valuable endeavours, so local suppliers should be part of a sustainable supply chain. However, the supply chain should not be limited in this way.

With an ever-expanding population to feed, using influence to ensure international producers are building sustainable systems is valuable too. This is important because in some cases, the fact

that an international supplier may be starting from scratch creates an advantage as they can learn from the mistakes of established systems to start to build a much more “sustainable” factory or farming operation from the start.

### 2.8 Think big



Don't limit ambition. This is because sometimes thinking big can make something that seems impossible, possible. This can be because instead of being constrained to a small and specific market segment, making the switch across the board means you can benefit from economies of scale.

“I've been working with our supply chain on pasta,” explains Tom Allen, Food Development Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland. “If I want to buy organic pasta for some of our dishes at the moment, it'll cost 40% more. But one of my suppliers told me that if we look at only serving organic pasta, they can make it 2% cheaper than what the standard pasta currently costs. Now, we haven't been able

to switch yet because we need to know they will be able to guarantee supply, and they don't want to be dominated by just one customer, but we're looking at ways to make it happen.”

Going even bigger and thinking industry-wide can also provide the opportunity to partner with others to also help to maximise buying power and impact. A partner might also have valuable knowledge and skills to share. For example, Nestlé Professional has knowledge, skills and science capabilities from its experience of working on issues such as sugar and water reduction, and the responsible sourcing of cocoa, coffee and cereals. This is why its efforts on the sustainable sourcing of cocoa meant it was the first major UK & Ireland confectioner to use 100% certified sustainable cocoa for its chocolate. Nestlé UK is also also looking to target upstream impacts. For example, it has forged a partnership with Community Wind Power to supply 50% of their energy requirements from a new farm in Scotland. The initiative is part of Nestlé UK's commitment to source all of its grid-supplied energy from a renewable source.

“Our expertise in areas like coffee, chocolate and cereals is very transferable,” says Paul Lumley, Brand and Communications Lead, Nestlé Professional. “For example, we are currently conducting 516 water-saving projects at our factories, saving 3.7 million m<sup>3</sup> of water a year – the equivalent of 1,500 Olympic size swimming pools. It means we can have a dialogue if a particular customer wanted to focus on an issue, such as water reduction. Our expertise means we can then work out how to deliver that for them.”

***“The benefits of sustainable diets are clear. A healthier planet for all, the ability to live a longer, happier, more fulfilled life, and the sustainability of a life lived with dignity.”***

**Pamela Maclean**, Food Development Manager, Bidfood



### Benchmark, then lead

When Casual Dining Group was devising its sustainability strategy, the company set itself an ambition of being the best in class within its sector. It started by benchmarking the business against its competitors whilst identifying the key existing and emerging issues. It then devised a rolling three-year programme outlining how the business would address the issues and what would need to be done to achieve best in class.

“We set ourselves the challenge of advancing our position on sustainability in 2015 such that we were genuinely leading the industry on all such related issues,” explains Simon Galkoff. “From there, we were then able to develop individual plans on the key areas such as sustainable sourcing, animal welfare, nutrition, health and ethical trading. Identifying these areas that are directly material to the business, their associated business risks and the potential positive impacts has enabled us to develop a road map which balances customer and business needs whilst doing the right thing. Fish is a good example where we have worked closely with suppliers to look at sustainable sources of supply and develop one of our key policies that requires all fish and seafood suppliers to source product sustainably to independently certified standards.”

These efforts have been recognised so far by two achievements. Casual Dining Group-owned brands, Cafe Rouge and Bella Italia topped the Fish2Fork survey on ethically sourced fish in restaurant chains; while Casual Dining Group was awarded a Compassion in World Farming Good Egg Award for its commitment to source 100% free range eggs for all products and ingredients by 2020 across all brands.



### 3

## Waste



Sustainable food is also food that does not create unnecessary waste at any point in its journey from field to fork. Waste can arise at every stage in a food product's lifecycle, from the way it is produced, processed and distributed in the supply chain to how it is prepped, prepared, cooked and served when it gets to the kitchen and then to the customer.

The sad reality is that up to 50% of food grown for human consumption never reaches its intended human stomach<sup>75</sup>. Foodservice is responsible for huge volumes of waste – yet WRAP estimates that 75% of food waste is avoidable<sup>76</sup>.

Waste should be considered at the planning stage, and food waste reduction should always follow the waste hierarchy of prevention; preparing for re-use, recycling and other recovery before disposal. Food waste is a low hanging fruit that is easy to tackle and has the side benefit that usually anything that reduces food waste should translate into reduced food costs. Packaging and food container waste must also be tackled – it is critical in protecting, preserving and transporting products but care must be taken to ensure that it is designed to minimise environmental impact and avoid over packaging.

The World Resources Institute's (WRI) *Food Loss and Waste Standard*<sup>77</sup> is a really useful tool in this area. It enables organisations to account for and report in a credible, practical and internationally consistent manner, how much food loss and waste is created and to identify where it occurs, enabling the targeting of efforts to reduce it. WRAP is also an invaluable source of information, tools and guidance. Collaboration within industry is also important as waste is often a complex supply chain challenge.

"Businesses will always look for ways to be efficient," notes Shafna Chowdhury, Senior Public Affairs Manager, Nestlé. "And companies can do a lot to tackle waste themselves through intelligent product design, sourcing etc. But packaging and supply chain is complex. More can be achieved by industry working collaboratively and taking a holistic approach, as the industry is now doing on issues like disposable cups. Identifying opportunities for waste prevention in a supply chain is a complex process, and not something we can do on our own. To help us find waste hot spots in our chocolate supply chain, we've been working with WRAP."

### Clear and simple

Chefs do not tend to see food waste so anything that makes it more visible tends to lead to waste reducing behaviour.

"We've changed from black to clear food bin liners and even that tweak has reduced waste," explains Tom Allen, Food Development Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland. "It shows kitchen teams exactly what they're throwing away, plus it makes staff more conscious that sloppy mistakes will be spotted because managers can see there's a whole bag of bread rolls or whatever in the bin that shouldn't be. This helps staff to be more active in avoiding waste in the first place."

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

The partnership has helped Nestlé to communicate and collaborate more effectively about waste across the whole supply chain. It has also led to the development of a Raw Material Risk tool that will help improve Nestlé's efficiency performance, as well as create a waste prevention standard that can be used across the market and replicated across different product streams.

### 3.1 Think measurement



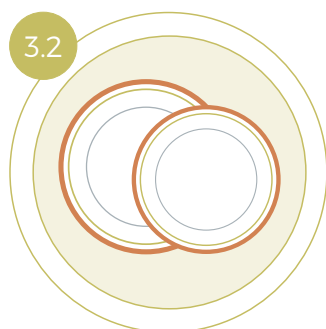
Waste audits – even simple ones which simply separate food waste into spoilage, prep and plate waste and count the number of bins filled each day – are well-known for prompting a new found awareness of food waste in site staff, which usually leads to spontaneous waste reducing behaviours. The key is to ensure audits are done regularly to keep up the momentum of waste reducing behaviours and so that progress can be fed back and celebrated.

Technological waste tracking systems such as LeanPath or Winnow are also popular as they provide more granularity of data and can translate food waste into cost and emissions instantly. The systems measure the amount of food wasted at the time and calculate the cost to the business if that behaviour was replicated over a week, year or other time period. They can also help identify unpopular dishes so menus can be adjusted accordingly.

#### Making the invisible, visible

One high street brand, which recently undertook a two-week waste audit to identify waste hotspots in its business, found that spoilage waste went down by around 60% from the first weekend to last, simply because making staff more aware of the waste meant they implemented better portioning and moved towards more cooking to order.

### 3.2 Think portion sizes



Getting portion sizes right means tackling waste and overconsumption whilst preventing resources that have had a significant environmental impact from being wasted.

When food accounts for 30% of UK emissions and 63% of UK adults are overweight or obese<sup>78</sup>, considering portion sizes that do not encourage waste or overconsumption has to be a component of sustainable meals. Many diners also find large portions off putting<sup>79</sup>, so providing more manageable portions can help win over customers. It can also help to keep ahead of legislation, such as Public Health England's newly introduced calorie caps for lunches and dinners sold via fast food outlets.

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### Offer a range of portion sizes

This allows those who want less to choose a smaller portion. Choose descriptions carefully though – research has shown that if given a choice between small or medium, people tend to go for medium. But call the same sizes medium and large, they will still go for medium.

Reducing the plate and dish size is also another proven way to reduce portion sizes<sup>80</sup> whilst maintaining customer satisfaction because of the visual illusion that a smaller plate makes a smaller portion look larger. It is also possible to maintain the plate fill but reduce the meat whilst increasing the pulses and vegetables.

Approaches such as these could help tackle one of the most common portion size dilemmas, with many high street operators reporting that portion size (especially for the meat protein element) plays a key part in customer complaints and media stories.

***“From most restaurants’ perspective, once you’ve sold a meal you’re not that interested in food waste. But that attitude stops us from preventing waste. If the portion had been smaller (whilst still meeting the customer expectation), there would have been less waste as well as lower ingredient costs. And it is this saving in the procurement of ingredients that goes onto the profit margin.”***

**Dr Rebecca Hawkins**, Managing Director, Responsible Hospitality Partnership

### Identify key waste offenders and reduce them

Waste audits which identify those elements that are the biggest plate waste offenders, can mean these portion sizes can be targeted as a priority. Waste is also a highly topical, emotive issue with clear consumer expectations that business must play its part. Children’s meal portion sizes are also a priority, with childhood obesity highly topical. Similarly, there is consumer expectation that businesses be a part of the solution. These factors mean that customers tend to be supportive if the reasons for portion size reductions are communicated positively and without guilt<sup>81</sup>.

### CASE STUDY: Tackling Waste

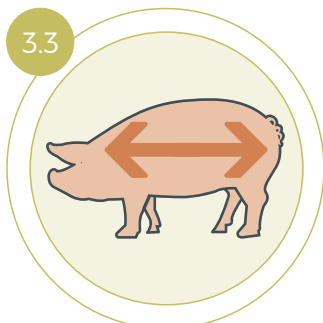
Vacherin has managed to cut food waste per cover by almost 25% across its five busiest cafés, recycle a record 5028kg of coffee waste with Bio Bean and sourced more ‘I’mPerfect’ wonky fruit and veg than ever before.

“If we didn’t tell them, none of our customers could tell which dishes contain I’mPerfect produce and which do not,” claims Dan Kelly, Director of Food, Vacherin. “There is a place and time for any size, shape or colour of produce – it’s just a matter of planning, education and creativity.”

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### 3.3 Think nose to tail, root to shoot



Modern consumption habits have become entrenched in the same few food groups and cuts with which people have become familiar. But industry insiders note how this lack of variety is not good for health and encourages plenty of waste, as certain cuts of meat struggle to find a market, whilst perfectly edible parts of fruit and vegetables can end up as waste.

Instead, foodservice should be thinking “nose to tail” and “root to shoot” – that is they should be thinking how to utilise each cut and trimming. This is especially important for meat products because meat is associated with some of the highest impacts, so making sure that recipes help create demand for a whole range of cuts

can go a long way to helping to ensure that within the industry, the whole animal is used and little is wasted. The rise in popularity over the last few years of dishes such as pig cheeks means that consumers can be surprisingly open to dishes that move away from the same old familiar cuts.

The increased use of “less attractive” or “grade two” fruits and vegetables in foodservice is also helping to tackle waste, but the practice is still not widespread enough. The foodservice, food retail and agriculture industry needs to work together to better utilise everything that is grown.

Better product utilisation is also just good business, both because less popular cuts can cost less, and because it prevents waste of products already paid for. So menus should be designed to ensure that nothing is wasted – either in the restaurant itself or further up the supply chain. Foodservice should be putting offal on the menu and serving those cauliflower leaves as a green, or incorporating it shredded into a stir-fry. It's this type of creativity that is required to ensure less is wasted.

### 3.4 Think quality not quantity



The food industry has become synonymous with plenty – with fully stocked supermarket shelves, serveries and menus, whatever the time or season.

This illusion of abundance drives the perception that there is an unlimited supply of food that belies the reality of a planet straining to cope with the constraints put upon it. The WWF has calculated that demand on natural resources has doubled since 1966 and we are currently using the equivalent of 1.5 planets to support our activities<sup>82</sup>. There clearly is only one planet Earth.

Current 24-hour demand and supply models (which are not focused on whether a product is in season, where it has come from and the waste associated with it) drives the norm that it does not matter when a customer comes in, they will always be able to get what they want and waste does not matter.

Reviewing the offering to reflect the time of day, introducing more careful portioning and cooking off, cooking more to order and looking at how well-stocked the front of house is, along with ensuring good food redistribution, can help to counteract this mentality, whilst potentially also fostering exclusivity if a “when it's gone it's gone” approach is taken.



# 4

## Education and communication



Health, wellbeing and sustainability may be on trend, but clear messaging can help to ensure that consumers and staff understand why sustainable diets are important and how they will benefit from increased uptake and adoption.

“Education has to be a top priority, for chefs as much as school children,” explains Paul Jervis, Programme Manager for Professional Chefs Diploma, Westminster Kingsway College. “This is so that the next generation starts to learn about the issues from a young age. It’s so embedded and it’s so intrinsic in everything we do now [at Westminster Kingsway], it’s not a separate issue anymore and students almost don’t notice it as much as they used to.”

### 4.1 Think languages and marketing



Different people have different drivers so often the promotion and marketing of sustainable food has to be multipronged to capture as many people – consumers and foodservice staff – as possible. But many campaigns have been hugely successful.

Calling something vegetarian or vegan doesn’t necessarily appeal to the flexitarian market so creativity and fun are important. Pret A Manger’s “EVeryone (not *just* for veggies)” and “OmniVores welcome” tag lines have connected with consumers and have helped to drive sales for “veggie Pret” products through the roof.

Others, such as BaxterStorey and The Sustainable Restaurant Association have enlisted celebrity chefs to be champions of the debate.

It’s also important to be honest and being careful of terms that can imply a value such as sustainability without any real credentials to back this up, such as artisan.

“The concept of sustainable meals is so broad,” admits Zoe Stennett-Cox, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Lead, Vacherin Ltd, “you have to pitch it correctly in that two-minute window you have with a customer. It can be hard to make it make sense immediately for a customer – communicating an issue around what makes food sustainable is so broad and diverse and communicating it all is a real challenge. None-the-less, the “A Greener Choice” menu has gone down really well, so we know there is definitely an appetite for it.”

# ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

## 4.2 Think fast



People make about 200 decisions about food each day, but it is believed that only about 14 of these are under conscious control<sup>83</sup>. Food decisions can also be characterised by what Daniel Kahneman termed “system 1 thinking” – decision making that is fast, intuitive, associative, metaphorical, automatic, impressionistic and which cannot be switched off<sup>84</sup>.

Influencing people towards more sustainable choices and food behaviours could therefore mean playing to people’s instinctive thinking by influencing them more subtly; for example, by showing a celebrity eating a brownie made with insect protein or getting a Gen Z vlogger to talk about green meals.

More research needs to be done to find out how our understanding of systems thinking is best applied to influence behaviours, but it is very likely that harnessing it could be a powerful tool.

***“The challenge to business is to experiment and keep experimenting and not to just do what we’ve done before. We’re in new territory here – we need to do pilots and stuff and use system 1 thinking. How do you play to people’s instinctive thinking? We need to be creative. We need to show David Beckham eating a veggie burger!”***

**Ed Gillespie**, Co-founder, Futerra

## 4.3 Think small



Often, operators have found that rather than being overwhelmed with the complexity of the message that can be transmitted around a sustainable food offering, like with any marketing strategy, it is more effective to focus on just one component. Vacherin, for example, took the idea of just 5L of water and what that would look like in terms of food, highlighting the fact that it requires 170 jugs of water to produce just one chicken breast. Choosing one or two relatively simple but powerful facts can create really powerful visuals and can help make an impact without overwhelming people.

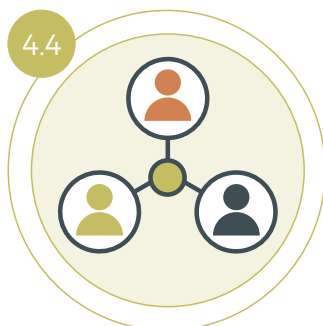
Teaching kids (and adults!) where food comes from and about sustainability through fun and creative engagement strategies which work subliminally, has often been found to be helpful and avoids accusations of being overtly preachy or educational. Examples include showing a drawing of a pig next to the sausages on a children’s menu to subliminally link the food and the animal, or including seeds in activity packs. The BNF *Food a fact of life* website ([www.foodafactoflife.org.uk](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk)) is a useful resource for engaging those from preschool to university environments.

“We have a duty of education to the consumer,” commented one senior manager for a high street chain. “Take our free range eggs. If we dot ‘free range’ around the menu, customers can start thinking about these issues, almost subliminally. We’re going to be in trouble in years to come if we don’t think start addressing these issues now.”

## ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DIETS

A best practice guideline for implementing diets that are good for people, planet and business in foodservice

### 4.4 Think customers



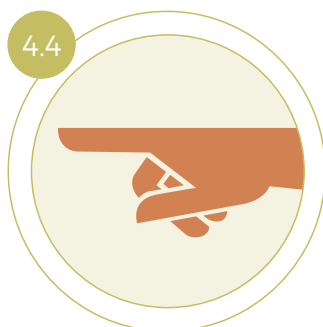
For many in foodservice, finding the resource to negotiate sustainable diet-related challenges and trade offs between issues such as almond versus cows' milk can be hugely tricky when budgets and teams are already stretched.

What some organisations, such as Pret A Manager, are finding though, is that the vegetarian consumer can be "terrifyingly well informed, about various sustainability topics" according to Caroline Cromar, Brand Director, Pret A Manger.

This potentially provides a unique opportunity to enlist them, possibly through social media engagement, competitions and campaigns. These can harnesses customer knowledge and passion and use it to tackle the most pressing concerns of a business.

Sharing platforms, such as apps and Fitbit style exercise trackers, also have a lot of potential to help influence consumer behaviours and drive trends around sustainable diets.

### 4.5 Think nudges



Make the sustainable options the default and the easiest option wherever possible, whilst educating consumers in an engaging, positive and un-preachy way about its green benefits.

Nudges, which make sustainable choices easier and more normal, such as reducing plate sizes, positioning and so on, can be highly effective at driving behaviours. A recent report called *Designed with Health in Mind*<sup>85</sup> set out how psychology and nudges can be used to draw consumers towards healthy options, but the advice can just as readily be applied to sustainable meals, which tend to be healthier options anyway.

Putting things first – whether that's physically in a servery line up or on a menu – and in the most accessible places, are two of the easiest and most powerful nudges. Using nudges in this way is especially important in public sector outlets such as schools and hospitals because of the government's responsibility to support health and sustainability, and because it should be seen to lead by example.

"Behaviour change is one area where we focus our attention," agrees Sue Dibb, Executive Director, Eating Better. "How do we make that change easier for people and there is a lot of evidence about the nudges we can use to achieve that. There is only a small niche who will go out of their way to make the healthier, more sustainable choice if it's harder."

## Conclusion

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Sustainable diets which marry food that is healthy for people, planet and profit are not only possible, but a business imperative. This guide is designed to facilitate the pan-industry shift to mainstream sustainable diets by outlining how efforts should be framed, and the business benefits that are likely to result.

The hope is that foodservice will take up this challenge, and share the results of their journeys, to make the shift to sustainable diets as swift and successful as possible. It is foodservice's responsibility and opportunity, and it promises to be an exciting and challenging journey, with multiple rewards.





### Research description

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Footprint Intelligence was commissioned by Nestlé Professional to conduct this independent research to create an actionable and non-technical guide to sustainable diets for foodservice. The research for this project comprised of a mix of desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with foodservice experts, as well as comment and insights gathered from other opinion leaders linked to industry. In total, over 30 experts were interviewed. Footprint Intelligence is indebted to the industry experts who generously gave their time and insights as part of the research process. A list of those who were happy to be acknowledged can be found below.

### About Footprint Intelligence

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With the ever-shifting sustainability debate, accurate intelligence, enabling businesses to make informed decisions, is vital. Footprint Intelligence is Footprint Media Group's research and analysis division helping companies to develop successful strategies in the context of responsible business practices.

Footprint Intelligence aims to drive, promote and share best practice by helping industry to answer some of the most pressing sustainability questions of our time by taking on the challenge of asking tough questions and finding answers. We use research and industry insight to bring industry together to find workable solutions, revealing opportunities, trends and challenges.

### Report author

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**Amy Fetzer** is Head of Research and Analysis for Footprint Media Group. A journalist, author and consultant specialising in sustainability, Amy is passionate about helping individuals and organisations become more sustainable and more successful. She is the co-author of "Climb the Green Ladder: Make Your Company and Career More Sustainable". She has also done work for Sodexo, Hewlett Packard and Unilever. Amy has an MSc with Distinction in Sustainable Development from the University of Surrey, winning the Roland Clift Award for Environment and Sustainability Research.

### Analyst

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**Catherine Edser** is part of the Footprint Intelligence research team. She is a founding member of the Fairtrade Merton Steering Committee, and has worked as an investment bank Operations Manager for JP Morgan.



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Nutritionist,  
Dine Contract Catering

*“A non-technical guide which outlines why and how foodservice can frame their thinking to move towards sustainable food is really missing right now so any contribution in this area will be hugely valuable to the foodservice industry.”*

**Helen Harwatt**, Sustainability Research Specialist

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