



SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY

The University of Aberdeen has, as part of its Aberdeen 2040 strategy, established 'Sustainable' as one of four strategic themes alongside 'Inclusive', 'Interdisciplinary' and 'International'.

As part of that institutional commitment, we undertake to ensure that our catering and hospitality facilities, service infrastructure, and the products they serve reflect those values.

We acknowledge that, in some cases, this will not be straight-forward. The range of possible ethical sourcing and production criteria is broad and includes but is not limited to animal-welfare; low-carbon; locally sourced; environmentally friendly; organic; and fairly traded. In cases where criteria overlap, value judgements may be required. We will work to ensure that these judgements reflect our customers' expectations.

This policy and the accompanying action plan put in place commitments that look to ensure that, where possible and appropriate, environmental, ethical and social considerations form an integral part of our catering choices.

To that end we will:

- ensure that, wherever possible, we provide affordable, ethically sourced, healthy and sustainable product choices to our staff, students and other consumers;
- continue to support the best principles and ambitions of ethical trading initiatives such as Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance, and maintain long-standing commitments in areas such as the use of free-range eggs, sustainable fish and the use of seasonal produce;
- explore how to improve or integrate new commitments across our offer;
- undertake to enhance awareness of new and existing commitments and to engage staff and students in an ongoing dialogue about these issues, including by surveying their attitudes and preferences;
- include specifications that support this policy in future catering contracts and seek to ensure that these specifications are considered in the awarding of the contract;
- build on our existing efforts to work with suppliers and contractors to minimise any negative environmental, ethical and social impacts of the products and services they provide;
- work within procurement guidelines to ensure that local and smaller suppliers are not discriminated against in the procurement process and in our specifications, supporting local suppliers where procurement frameworks permit;
- review our Sustainable Food Policy on a regular basis, amending targets and communicating outcomes as appropriate;
- develop and review appropriate performance indicators and evaluation criteria to measure and manage our progress;
- work with colleagues across our catering and commercial operations to raise awareness of this policy and the role they can play as individuals in implementing it;
- reduce the environmental impact of packaging and disposable items by eliminating the use of single-use plastics from our catering and hospitality services, moving instead to more sustainable options e.g. compostable items or the use of reusable alternatives;
- work with University of Aberdeen academics to showcase appropriate food-related research projects as part of the catering offer.

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SUSTAINABLE FOOD STATEMENT ACTION PLAN

1. Customer Engagement & Awareness

- improve awareness of all sustainable food initiatives through appropriate point of sale
- increase awareness of sustainable options, including theme days, and work to enhance sales
- gauge customer views on ethical, environmental and social criteria and seek to understand better the interests of those who use our services
- continue the development of commercial and working partnerships with local operators

2. Ethical and Fair Trade

- embrace the principles and ambitions of ethical accreditation initiatives such as Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance etc
- improve the range of ethically traded lines stocked or used in catering where appropriate
- indicate ethically traded content on menus

3. Fish

- prohibit the use of any 'fish to avoid' fish species (as defined by the Marine Conservation Society)
- indicate our compliance with Marine Stewardship Council certification on menus and pursue MSC accreditation
- ensure that the tinned fish we use is caught using sustainable fishing methods

4. Fruit and Vegetables

- promote seasonal fruit and vegetables and communicate where these are used
- set target for increasing the use of seasonal produce on previous year
- maintain enhanced provision of vegetarian, vegan and flexitarian meals

5. Meat

- work with suppliers to understand the production system under which animals are reared
- only use meat that is reared under systems with highly rated animal welfare standards
- eliminate red meat from retail café menus and internal hospitality

6. Dairy & Eggs

- investigate opportunities to increase the use of organic milk and other dairy products
- continue to use only fresh free-range eggs
- continue to reduce the use of products with 'hidden eggs' that are not free-range e.g. in processed or pre-prepared foods
- continue to assess the impact and benefits of stocking non-dairy alternatives e.g. oat milk

7. Water

- eliminate the use of plastic bottled water in delivered catering
- ensure that filtered or tap water is available at catering outlets
- work with customers to reduce the use and sale of bottled water

8. Delivered Hospitality

- maintain commitment to ethically traded teas / coffees
- eliminate the use of plastic bottles of water in delivered hospitality
- where reusable cutlery and crockery are not appropriate, single use alternatives to be made from renewable, compostable and/or biodegradable materials i.e. eliminate the use of single-use plastics

9. Waste

- ensure that zero food waste goes to landfill
- reduce food waste with service / demand appropriate production methods
- work with customers to reduce the number of disposables to landfill (aiming for no bio-degradable or fully recyclable disposables going to landfill)
- eliminate the use of single-use plastics entirely
- promote and support our reusable cup scheme and reduce single-use cup waste
- ensure that waste oil continues to be collected by an approved contractor and recycled

10. Other Areas

- *Cleaning*: work with in-house cleaning team to ensure use of environmentally friendly cleaning materials and processes with reduced / zero chemical content
- *Transport*: continue to work with suppliers to reduce daily deliveries and associated on-campus vehicular movements
- *Accreditation*: proactively investigate catering certification opportunities e.g. the Soil Association's 'Food for Life', Marine Stewardship Council, Good Egg etc.
- *Research*: establish links with our academics in areas such as food security and nutrition.
- *Organic*: consult the University community on its attitudes towards organic products

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