

NPF consultation

The right to healthy food

Food sovereignty

1. Are these the right principles on which to build our food policies?

2. Are there other core principles we should adopt?

3. What form should a right to food take?

The Co-operative Party believes that UK should embed the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), "zero hunger by 2030" into domestic legislation. There are two key relevant SDG 2 targets which need to be on the face of any bill:

- By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
- By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

4. Should we be aspirational and visionary in our approach, or should we be measured and incremental?

The vision should be aspiration, the delivery measured.

5. Should we establish in law a universal right to healthy food or should we first prioritise the rights of access to healthy food for certain population groups, such as school children; expectant mothers; elderly and vulnerable people receiving care?

In practice the state already provides access to food for particular groups: those in hospital, those serving in the armed forces, 5-7 year olds and those entitled to free school meals, and prisoners for example. Additionally, there are schemes such as Healthy Start which seek to address the nutritional needs of some pregnant women and young families.

SDG2 does prioritise infants, adolescent girls pregnant and lactating women and older persons and therefore the next Labour Government must build on existing schemes which address these groups first. However, the law should be universal in coverage.

6. Should there be a duty to provide food or should the duty be to avoid hunger, or malnutrition?

It should be to duty to ensure physical and financial access to adequate food. This is in line with other international commitments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Land

7. Is there a need to review and reform land law and public land management systems in order to underpin a sustainable food system?

8. Should we establish a Land Commission to conduct a review and make legal recommendations and, if yes, what should its remit be?

9. Should we seek to integrate our vision with that of the devolved administrations which operate under different systems?

10. What should a sustainable land policy look like?

Our submission focuses on the right to food, but as the consultation recognises by starting off with the principles of food sovereignty, it is difficult not to address the food system without the considering issues of land ownership, community rights, and producers.

Food production and distribution

11. What are the national and international barriers, legal, commercial or administrative, that might constrain our development of sustainable, healthy and efficient food systems?

12. What measures should we take first to ensure local food production is environmentally and economically sustainable?

13. What most constrains the economic and environmental sustainability of food producers?

14. How can we best tackle food waste?

We focus on question 14, how to tackle food waste.

Many co-operatives work closely with FareShare to distribute unsold food. However Central England Co-operative's partnership with FareShare EastMidlands stands out as the retailer uses its own distribution vehicles to collect and deliver store level surplus to FareShare depots rather than waiting for collections from charities themselves which allows easily perishable goods to be distributed. The long-term goal is to see 100 % of best before goods that have not been sold redistributed and put to use by good causes.

Workforce

15. What changes are needed to improve working conditions and safety in the food production and distribution industries?

16. What regulatory measures could reduce economic volatility and provide long-term security in the farming and fishing sectors, and for food producers and their employees?

17. What workforce does a thriving and sustainable food industry require?

18. What measures could deliver the necessary knowledge and skills base in the food industry, and what might encourage new entrants, apprentices or trainees?

19. What steps could be taken to encourage faster or better take up of different, newer emergent technologies in our food production and distribution industries?