

Appendix C Community Based Food Security Assessment Questionnaire Response Data

1. Do you feel that communities themselves can play any part in addressing food in/security. If so would you mind explaining briefly how you think they could best be addressing it?

Yes, by growing their own food (allotments, garden share), buying local food to support the local producers, having weekly farmers markets, school growing projects, planting fruit trees/fruit bushes and nut trees on council parks/laybys/roundabouts etc

YES, by encouraging more self-sufficiency and 'war-effort' style 'grow your own food/dig for victory', by creating more allotment space and by continuing to promote locally produced food.

Yes communities have a large part to play. Awareness raising of the issues. Re-skilling in order that everyone has an understanding of how food is and can be grown. Food purchasing decisions – ensuring local producers thrive. Cooking from scratch.

Yes, it seems that we are going to need to learn the skills we are going to need to be able to feed ourselves in the future really quickly! As fossil fuels are at the root cause of our current environmental problems, projects need to be addressing the issue of petrochemicals in all of their activities including food. We do need to work out the best ways of doing this at a community level.. We need to know what grows really well in our area in order that we can feed ourselves, adapt our gardens & have plants do well here. By starting projects locally to address their needs in terms of food production, education and skilling up people to grow.

Communities may go partway to addressing food in/security issues. Consumer purchase power is a valuable tool in elevating the status of locally sourced, sustainably produced food and such produce goes partway to addressing UK food security. However, figures from DEFRA demonstrate that, whilst the consumer has continued to benefit from imported foreign produce, production of indigenous UK products has declined since the mid-1990's¹. Food provenance is known to add value to products such as Welsh beef and Welsh lamb, yet approximately 49% of consumers remain 'uninterested or uninformed' about provenance issues².

With this in mind, UK food security must firmly remain a responsibility of the Government and UK farmers must be offered the resources necessary to secure long-term sustainable increases in agricultural production. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy should provide the incentives and mechanisms to encourage agri-production methods which use less water and fuel and which have a lower environmental impact whilst maintaining or increasing current levels of production.

¹Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 21st July 2009. Session 2008-09. Number 28.

²Food Provenance Target Group December 2007 *sourced in* Farming, Food and Countryside: Building a Secure Future. A New Strategy for Farming. Welsh Assembly Government Report, March 2009.

Yes. If motivated, co-ordinated and skilled they can organise grassroot projects and support change in behaviour.

Communities play a vital part. It is only by working together than change in society will become embedded.

Examples:

- Garden share schemes where people without gardens work on the gardens of neighbours
- Local food directory to help people become aware of what is available locally
- An Eat Local Food campaign/week to help community explore how it can be done

Raising awareness of the issues to encourage consumers to make choices that support food security

Yes. Encourage everyone to grow some veg no matter how small a patch. Promote allotments. School to develop allotments and encourage the kids in every way possible. Buy local to build local capacity. Learning to cook so that natural local produce can be used.

Yes certainly. Precedents have been established for food co-ops where people volunteer their labour to grow the food on a publicly owned or leased site and then in return for their labour they receive a share of the harvest. In the war there were pig clubs. What is required is the will, leadership and the formal structure to bring people together in a communal food growing enterprise. This is happening in the valleys in several places. As the price/availability of food is affected by oil price, this will become an increasingly attractive (necessary) option.

I work for a food NGO called East Anglia Food Link, which has been working for 10 years on sustainable food systems and for 4 years on peak oil and its impact on the food system. I am also a core group member of Transition Norwich. TN and EAFL are working together in two areas:

- a) a "Norwich Food Plan", ie the food chapter of an "energy descent plan" or "resilience plan" for Norwich. This aims to identify what kind of food system will be most resilient in a post-peak-oil, post-peak-phosphate world with a big climate change problem. For example, what foods should we be eating – and which do we need to eat much less of (the answer to the latter is almost certainly meat and dairy produce). Where should these be produced – how well does the "local" message fit with the "resilience" message? How do we manage the recycling of nutrients (especially phosphate) back to the land? And so on.
- b) Incidentally, we're talking with Transition Network and others about doing something like that on a national level, so that Transition Initiatives and others can start with a better grounding of thinking, as they set out to work out their own EDAPs and their own projects. I'm concerned that local Transition Initiatives don't always have a strong grounding in food issues and so just tend to latch on to rather simplistic notions like "local food".

We've also bid for funds to kick off some practical projects in Norwich that fit with what the Norwich Food Plan suggests as steps towards resilience – for example, a local flour mill, a veg CSA etc.

Yes if they can get off their backsides to do it – capacity is an issue, especially for small transition groups such as ourselves

Yes, communities can play a part in addressing food security: on current trends there will be no alternative. In poor countries communities already have to be self-reliant; with climate change and peak oil, communities in rich countries can continue buying time for a while but at some point they will either have to become self-reliant in food, or face major problems.

Q1 continued

If communities do not play a role in feeding themselves, the only other options are assistance from the government, the private sector or the voluntary sector. I don't have much experience of local or regional government but at a national level I note that public services are already stretched far beyond breaking point (viz. the UK's £850bn debt) so it's unrealistic to wait for the national government to step in. Internationally, organisations such as FAO and IFPRI are very good at carrying out research and formulating policy but less good at doing the difficult job of talking to farmers who are facing bankruptcy about why they need to invest in expensive new seed and equipment, or talking to disenfranchised teenagers about why they need to start composting, or talking to underfunded and politically divided town councils about why they need to commission a land audit etc etc.

The large-scale private sector is currently more part of the problem than part of the solution, though some of the techniques that have been developed to get food and drink to rural communities in developing countries by companies such as Unilever (see Oxfam's study of Unilever's economic impact in Indonesia) and Coca-Cola (see the International Finance Corporation/Harvard University CSR Initiative study of 'manual distribution centres' in Tanzania) implies that communities should set ideology aside and learn from these organisations.

The small-scale private sector (including farmers) offers real potential because the owners are often active within local communities and have good links with local producers and retailers, but there is no systematic engagement between communities and small businesses, and even less engagement between policymakers and small businesses.

There is some cause for optimism in the emerging areas of cross-sector partnerships and social enterprise, but these are both currently niche/specialist areas unlikely to be able to deliver on the necessary scale without a vast input of time and resources.

Which leaves the voluntary sector (organisations such as the Soil Association or Sustain), who are very highly overstretched, but have lots of analysis and can explain the issues in terms that communities can understand.

This very informal analysis suggests that the key allies for communities in enhancing their food security will be local businesses and voluntary organisations, with unknown support from local and regional government agencies, using tools and techniques borrowed where possible from the large-scale private sector. To quote economic David Fleming '...localisation stands, at best, at the limits of practical possibility, but it has the decisive argument in its favour that there will be no alternative' (Fleming, 2006).

Yes Funded facilitators

Yes - by getting involved in movements such as Transition Towns, Cittaslow, Community Farms & Gardens etc. By helping local schools with gardening, planting orchards and planning for school dinners to include as much of this food as possible (and doing the same for Hospitals). By awareness raising through all possible means.

Encouraging local growers, allotments, community gardens, permaculture practice . Supporting farmer's markets and farm gate sales and buying locally sourced organic food.

2. do you know of any examples of communities addressing food in/security in the UK (or other 'developed' country), particularly in response to climate change or peak oil. If yes please include location and contact details, if at all possible, in your response.

Totnes.

Food not Bombs' has always taken care of people with less food by sharing what is normally thrown away at the end of markets, or by supermarkets., preparing hot meals from it and distributing it, sometimes from mobile units pulled by bicycles etc.

The Transition Towns (including Tring) are starting to address food security. Permaculture groups. The Sheffield Abundance initiative.

Community supported agriculture schemes are starting to address some of our food issues, for example, I had a recent read re the Stroud CSA, though I'm not sure to what extent they're addressing the fossil fuel issue, especially as many customers come to pick up their vegetables in cars.

No. However, the FUW continues to campaign for the procurement of locally based and seasonal produce.

Yes there are hundreds of community local food projects, too many to list. A recent roundup of these had been done by Tamzin Pinkerton about transition food projects

People around the UK are beginning to address food security:

- The upsurge in take up of allotments and the long waiting lists everywhere.
- More seeds for vegetables are now sold than flowers in the UK

Many different flavours of community supported agriculture are rising up. In Forest Row we have two farms Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch.

DOVE Workshop, Sarn Helen Community Garden, Banwen NPT. Contact is Sue Price. <http://www.doveworkshopuk.org/communitygarden.php>

Green Valleys Project, Abercynon, RCT – Ben Dineen <http://www.bryncynonstrategy.org.uk/environment.htm>

Riverside Community Market Cardiff – <http://www.riversidemarket.org.uk/projects.htm>

- Transition Initiatives including Transition Norwich as above
- Growing Communities, OrganicLea, Sustain's work on urban agriculture...

No.

No

Q2 Continued

Names given below, contact details are all available in the URLs/reports:

- Transition Town Totnes, Rob Hopkins, 'Can Totnes feed itself' project, see <http://transitionculture.org/2009/07/10/announcing-the-release-of-can-totnes-and-district-feed-itself/>
- Hackney's Growing Communities Initiative, Julie Brown, see <http://www.growingcommunities.org/>
- Geofutures, GIS mapping of community 'foodsheds' (as opposed to 'watersheds'), Mark Thurstain-Goodwin, see <http://www.geofutures.com/whatwereupto/foodsheds-the-mashup/>

Transition Stroud, 'Can Stroud feed itself', Fi Macmillan and Dave Cockcroft http://community.stroud.gov.uk/documents/34_Food_Availability_in_Stroud_District.pdf

Yes Transition Stroud Paper (will email) but nothing has been taken forward

As above - plus eg Incredible Edible Todmorden (West York's)

3. If such work HAS been done where do any gaps exist for community based food in/security work in the UK - what still needs doing?

More joined up thinking at local authority and county level. More grants to support local producers starting up.

More education about preparing home produced food. How to preserve vegetables etc – should be taught at school!

Every community needs to be aware of the issues and to start addressing them.

Local skills, local adaptation, low impact, biodiversity enhancement, creation of local trade and exchange eg of food /plant materials/products.

Thousands more community local food projects, More work on distribution infrastructure, wholesaling, Lots of help to create more small farms and people with the skills to work on them, change in culture, citizens habits and expectations.

Lots needs doing – most of the work is being done voluntarily

The labour expended is voluntary, the quality of food grown (organic) is premium price. These projects can serve as subsistence with public subsidy but on the open market the people who work on the projects couldn't afford the food they grow! The economies of scale don't make this food affordable. However, there are aims in Wrexham from Chris Fox of Groundwork to establish a co-operative network which would aim to do things like group/regional procurement of seeds and equipment thus bringing the cost of production down and allowing projects like this to compete as social enterprises with the private sector. Thus a production network could be established that was co-operative, organic, GM-limited and fair trade. This could then compete on the open market. The situation currently is that these projects would not exist without volunteer labour and massive public funding. If its simply a question of survival in an apocalyptic scenario well anyone can grow spuds on any bit of land but if we are aiming to create robust, self-sufficient local economies that allow the UK to aspire to a degree of food security then we have more work to do.

- a) Work needs to be underpinned by much better planning and thinking about what a future food system will look like. But various initiatives, including the conversation we're having with Transition Network, are already starting to get to grips with this.
- b) I'm concerned that community groups too readily think about fruit and veg – whether grow-your-own or communal growing schemes or CSAs or box schemes. My answer to 2b above is entirely about veg. Yet fruit and veg are unlikely ever to make up more than about 10% of our calorific intake (which by the way turns out to be the key determinant of our future food security). Staple foods like wheat, barley, oats and beans are much more important, but they tend to get overlooked. (Conversely, meat and dairy are irrelevant but they get loads of attention, for example from the farmers' markets movement, farm shops etc). Local storage and processing of staple foods – which means milling, malting, grinding oats etc – are key areas for attention.

THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTES A RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS 3-6

The work begun by Transition Town Totnes and Geofutures is now looking to undertake a national roll-out and I would very strongly urge any follow-up effort from this scoping paper to align itself with this robust, credible, objective and already-established effort. The national roll-out will work by communities from all around the country entering data on land use, population etc. into a centralized database. Particular locations, e.g. Powys, or communities within Powys, will then be able to use the database for local-level analysis. This analysis is where the new, innovative, locally-relevant solutions will emerge because it will yield a land use map of the area if the food system was relocalised – this is a REALLY powerful visual tool which anyone can understand readily, and provides a concrete focus for Transition groups to begin conversations with local landowners and farmers.

Also the TTT/Geofutures work contains scope for regional and local-level analysis because community-based food security is necessarily a collective effort. Even if, in theory, a place can feed itself (because it is rural, or a port), there are many cities in this country that cannot and therefore there will be great pressure on rural and fishing areas not only to feed themselves but to feed bigger neighbours as well. This implies cooperation and collaboration on an unprecedented (except in wartime) scale, and the TTT/Geofutures project provides a structure to facilitate this.

Once the data has been inputted and a clearer picture emerges of what will need to happen in order for particular communities to become more self-reliant (that is, a picture of what type of food will need to be grown locally and what the land use requirements will be), developing/trialling actions and solutions probably starting with a local farm, or with a group of local farms, will be the most important piece of work to be undertaken. If this is done effectively – or even if it fails spectacularly – it will stimulate local conversations about where food comes from and its future availability.

Culture Change to get work adopted. Most people still want to shop at Tesco's

A HUGE amount of work still needs doing - especially awareness raising about the risks to all communities - but especially urban communities - of not building local resilience to quite probable food shortages in the fairly near future.

4. If work HAS NOT been done, what do you think the priorities should be for such community-based food in/security work (NB these may apply at whatever level you have experience of eg local, regional or national) (Please rank in importance and use '1.' as most important)

Priority	Rank	Overall
• Awareness Raising	3,4,2,1,2,1,1,1,2,1,6,2,1, High,	27
• Political commitment,	2,3,1,1,6,4,3,4,6,2,2,4,6, High,	44
• Partnership forming,	5,2,6,2,5,5,1,4,5,4,5,3,3, High	50
• Capacity building,	4,5,4,3,3,6,1,1,1,4,1,5,2, High,	40
• Development of practical tools and advice,	1,1,3,3,4,2,2,1,4,3*,4,1,4, High,	33
• Developing/trialling actions and solutions,	6,6,5,3,1,3,2,4,3,4,3,1,5, High	46

- Others (please specify) ...
- Skilling up people, sustainable food production in the local area, creation of forest gardens and local biodiversity.
- Growing sustainable food crops in the local area, tree crops, bushes, fruits, berries, vegetables .Research into plant breeding to breed characteristics such as blight resistance.
- Through appropriately targeted awareness and information campaigns, UK consumers should be encouraged to consider the in/security of the food items they purchase. It is vitally important to reconnect people with the food they consume and to remind the consumer that, due to rising population numbers, food security is as important an issue today as it was during the rationing imposed throughout the Second World War. In order for consumers to be able to make a more informed decision, the relevant Government bodies must conduct targeted research to determine the most sustainable methods of food production and to find the optimum balance between welfare, sustainability and production levels. Furthermore, it is essential that the Government leads by example by sourcing locally based, sustainable produce for use in the public sector.
- These things need to be done together, they don't work alone
- *we would love to have some 'Tools', and instructions to use them. Don't have the capacity to develop ideas ourselves, so need to have them handed to us on a plate
- Funded positions to lead this work - everyone is too busy to do vountarily

5. Using the above list of priorities, would you please clarify what you think could be done (again at whatever level you have experience of) for each priority, to make a difference to local food in/security at the community level:

Awareness Raising:

- More inspiring events to reach wider cross section of community. Freebies – seeds swaps/plant swaps with advice, discounts at local merchants selling pots/ compost etc.
- Schools
- People need to understand the issues
- Targeted consumer campaigns; even where food is being produced in a manner that benefits food security, production will become unsustainable if this produce is not purchased by the consumer.
- campaign for large number and wide range of people to undertand the issues facing us and the need to prepare
- local food directory; eat local food week.
- my orgnaision is in the business of letting people know that climate change and peak oil threatens food security. There is a large amount of inertia to overcome in raising awareness and provoking action. We are holding a conference on the 25/26th Sept to address this – there will be much expert opinion and debate.
- need to get a market culture developed, people need to see the market for what it is, a fantastic opportunity that could happen more regularly.
- Make dozens of copies of the DVD 'A Farm for the Future' and give them to all community groups (including Community COuncils) with a short explanation of why it is essential viewing (and nothing to do with the drudgery of pre World War 2 farming). Get them also to 6th Form and colleges.
- community events, local media articles, building contacts with local institutions

Political Commitment:

- Grants. More sympathetic planning system with planning policies to support local food initiatives and business opportunities.
- Changing import/export practice. Encouraging local food use. DIScouraging import. Putting horticulture onto the national curriculum.
- There needs to be commitment from the Government to lead the changes needed.
- By presenting projects to funding bodies which have the environment as their focus working towards solving local food security, trade & exchange. Report ing on the progress of the projects, leading by example from the bottom up.
- Local procurement for the public sector.
- noise from voters and media on these issues. Better informed policy makers
- have food security as an issue and not rely on far away markets to supply
- Unless a party has the moral/philosophical basis for breaking the old economic paradigma then don't expect miracles. The political establishment is morally bankrupt and bereft of vision. We need a democratic revolution. You could say that voting for Obama was an American democratic revolution. In the UK we would have to put the Green Party in power before we could see genuine political commitment.
- Price food properly so we are incentivised to develop local food
- Tax for Carbon loading on food.
- Talk to as many local councillors as possible about hte issue and persuade them to show the above DVD at one of their meetings, and make a commitment (through a council resolution) to work with local groups involved with this issue, and provide & promote community gardens, allotments etc, and provide grants for training.
- building contacts within local government, writing to ministers on issues, advocacy work

Partnership Forming:

- Encouraging school/local residential centres/nursing homes etc to link with local producers for their supplies
- Different agencies working together. There are a lot of initiatives going on – there is the danger that the effort will become diluted.
- Forming partnerships within local communities with funding bodies and other transition networks
- Partnership between Government and agricultural Industry bodies is essential to examine where agri-research should be targeted. Moreover, Government funding is required to provide research bodies with the resources necessary to conduct the relevant research. Other partnerships of relevance include those between retailers and producers to ensure appropriate supply and demand.
- arranging workshops and exchanges between different bodies
- between communities and with suppliers
- It follows then that people don't need politicians. When people want to do something, they can do it but they can not do it alone. The Transition movement needs to strive to avoid being its own closed world and link with what already exists. In some towns this is happening but in others the wheel is being reinvented. The valleys communities and the Development Trusts Association are very good at partnership. Avoid creating new structures – networking simply means talking to people. No more umbrella groups please. I work for one. Work with the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, DTA Wales, Cynnal Cymru and Transition – that's all the umbrella groups you need. Talk to each other.
- With eg. local schools and colleges (and LEA), Rural Regeneration Units, Communities First, Local Hospital, WI, Farming Unions, Local Shops, County Councils, Farmers Markets etc - also local landowners.
- connecting with all the local groups which share common concerns, developing networks and shared web facilities, hosting events with other groups,*

Capacity Building:

- Mechanisms to maximise food production need to be applied at all level of the supply chain – from production systems to transport systems and storage facilities.
- apprenticeships and placements . participatory planning/learning
- By talking to each other you learn. Share skills informally. Set up visits to each others projects. Chris Fox in Wrexham has a good idea of getting all the co-ops, charities and social enterprises in his area to work together on procurement and trading
- Price food properly so we are incentivised to develop local food
- Tax for Carbon loading on food.
- through training courses - especially in permaculture and forest gardening.
- training workshops , apprentices schemes, buddy schemes and peer learning and tutoring, active learning and reflective practice*

Development of practical tools and advice:

- Having a local 'veg doctor' 'orchard doctor' – someone named in the local community who is funded a day or so a week to support local people growing food. Also a project co-ordinator paid to make the links between organizations and producers/ run farmers markets etc.
- schools allotments
- Fed of City Farms and Community Gardens.
- Education for all ages. Access to experts with regards Horti/Agriculture
- Metalsmiths needed to remodel metals & forge tools
- Development should target the consumer to support awareness campaigns and should target the producer to enhance output and sustainability. Positive feedback mechanisms would be appropriate in this case.
- accessible and face to face ideas and toolkits. one to one help. networking between successful projects, showcasing.
- a Mapping Exercise to find out where sources of local food, orchards already exist in the local area, and the production of local food maps/booklets/leaflets for general distribution. Cookery Demonstrations using local food - including wild food. Simple 'Growing and Cooking' local advice cards (including contacts for courses etc) which could be given out by local food shops and businesses. Visits to successful projects (with as many Councillors as possible) for inspiration. Easy to obtain grants from WAG and local authorities. More financial support for Farmers Markets in traditional High Streets.
- Fed of City Farms and Community Gardens.
- don't have time to do the thinking. Need someone else to do that for me/us
- local sourcing depots and resource banks and materials, info on websights, sharing schemes , use of LETS to finance initiatives.*

Developing/trialling actions and solutions:

- An area within a community given over to demonstrations/trials
- The Dyfi Valley seedsavers are doing 2 projects, one is a fruit project, surveying local orchards, looking at what fruit trees are doing well in the local area. They then run fruit grafting workshops using wood from local successful trees to propagate new ones.
- Requires an holistic approach at every level of the supply chain.
- involve future leaders in practical experience. Recruit powerful and skilled people.
- Its underway. Just do it and learn from each other's mistakes and successes. Then there's an opportunity for people such as yourself to get work doing evaluations, reports, reviews, analysis.
- Work with local High School/College to firstly raise awareness, and then to establish a Forest Garden* in the school/college grounds - with expert help - which would be an ongoing practical education for the pupils and staff, as well as increasingly supplying more and more fresh produce. Keep the press informed of developments (including setbacks - so others can learn from them) *Nut orchards particularly important to supply future protein/carbohydrate needs in case of grain shortages.
- a research structure which is built on the Kolb learning cycle and Donald Schon's work on learning, reflection and change*

Others ... :

Massive and systemic change is needed quickly.

The problem we have with all of this is that the food system we will need in future – that is, the resilient one – is very different from the one we have now. And the one we need is not going to catch on or become popular or mainstream just now. People enjoy the range, convenience, price and quality provided by our globalised, efficient, but fragile mainstream food system.

That's why I see "capacity building" as all that we can do at this time. I see capacity in terms of the "four capitals" – human, social, physical and environmental (I'm excluding the fifth, financial, for perhaps obvious reasons).

Most of "priorities" you list above can be related to this capacity building:

- 1) developing and trialling actions and solutions, as we propose to in Norwich with our practical projects, will help to build skills and understanding about how to grow veg, mill flour etc. The actual amounts produced will be very small, but hopefully the skills will be larger and ready to replicate and spread when they are needed.
- 2) developing partnerships might also be a part of this capacity-building (ie social capital). But most of the establishment (including farmers, agricultural colleges, local government etc) aren't really ready for this yet, so I don't think we should waste too much energy on it.

Q5 continued

- 3) Awareness-raising is also part of building capacity and getting people's thinking ready for the changes ahead, so they can change more quickly when they need to. A few very committed individuals will underpin the practical projects by buying the local veg, flour etc.
- 4) Practical tools and advice are really about growing capacity by sharing the pilot projects that succeeded in one place with Transition Initiatives etc in another place. So that's again about human and social capital.
- 5) One day we'll have the political commitment we need. But at the moment the politicians are still committed to economic growth and globalisation. So again my own gut feeling is not to waste too much time on them for now.

6. What community based food in/security work would you find most useful in your own work/activities (and please feel free to explain why)

Allotments or garden share so we can grow our own food and share surplus.

Encouraging schools to cater for staff and pupils using local produce.

Having just started this, I'm not entirely sure how to go about it – so perhaps that's what I need, some sort of blueprint for guidance.

Awareness raising. The FUW continues to promote the high welfare, sustainability and environmental ethics inherent in UK farming: However, monetary constraints, lack of knowledge and the perpetuation of agri-based fallacies by certain animal rights and environmentalist lobby groups often confuse and mislead the general public and this may lead to purchases which are both unsustainable and which promote food insecurity. Little public attention is offered to the rights of the producer. Indeed, under the definition of food security in the present questionnaire, the ability of the consumer to afford the produce is paramount whilst no attention is given to those producing the food and the necessity of making a profit from agri-production. Any action or solution employed to increase food security must have a workable basis on the ground level and must also allow producers to earn a living from food production.

identifying key and able people. Pay them to mentor other groups and promote their thinking.

I have my own allotment. I'd rather work with like minded people in my village and have a communal growing space. I'd like to be part of a farm co-operative and get meat, eggs and milk from animals I have a stake in. I'd give up my job to work on a communal village farm and take my chances with the weather like humans have done for centuries.

I think we're ahead of the field here [in their own community] ...

Local people to leading [sic] growing initiatives - funded.

Building strong links between High School and Community, and finding engaging ways of involving pupils in finding out about benefits of local food - and growing and cooking and eating it! Celebrate all successes. It would help if LEA's employed a certain number of 'expert' staff to liaise between schools and communities, and provide advice and back up for food growing projects.

we are currently developing local permaculture courses

7. Food Security as defined by the FAO (see above) could be described as including issues of: access, availability, stability and utilisation⁽²⁾. From your own work on, or knowledge of the food system in the UK, which of these four do you think are the weakest components in a UK rural community's food system, particularly in light of climate change and peak oil?

Stability.

Utilisation.

Availability.

Stability. UK farmers are placed under some of the toughest welfare and environmental legislation in Europe and this elevates the cost of production above imported food from other member states. The UK agriculture industry requires the consumer to recognise that sustainable food production is costly and that cheaper imports do not necessarily offer the same degree of food security as locally sourced produce. True food security is dependent on sustainable, and often costly, production methods¹.

availability and stability are threatened by climate change and peak oil

Most people in the UK can presently physically access nutritious food, some with more ease than others - but many people do not. Some reasons are social/attitude.

Access and availability. The buying power of large retailers ensures that food production is predominantly tied to retail outlets. We have a private sector farm shop in our village and I shop there once a week but its all at premium gourmet prices. Such places are few and far between. It would be good to see the market for local produce open up and for co-ops and social enterprises to get in on this. The Creation Development trust in Blaengarw (the valleys again) is developing a relationship with a local farmer – look them up and tell them Cynnal Cymru sent you please.

Availability is the key issue for the future. We face problems with primary production right through processing and supply-chain. Rural communities ironically are probably even less food-secure than urban ones, as our food systems have become essentially urban (ie supply chains revolve around urban distribution hubs) and rural shops etc are treated as outlying points in a distribution system that centres on cities. However, in future this will reverse and many rural areas will be more able to tap directly into local production, whereas cities may have little to offer in return for the food they need.

I'm not sure exactly what you mean by stability – I guess it means resilience? Our food system is very non-resilient because it is too efficient, with too little redundancy of key components. And of course it's completely dependent on oil, gas and phosphate.

Question 7 continued

Utilisation – locals don't support local producers, so don't know what to do with the stuff. A local loyalty card might help

Availability – there isn't the variety of local produce to keep us going in any difficulty arising from CC or PO. We'll be fine for apple juice and meat but nothing else is grown much locally.

Stability – our food supplies are very vulnerable, due to our reliance upon supermarkets. The local growers will find it much easier than Waitrose to get food to our town.

all these feel vulnerable , possibly availability is the weakest

It is impossible to answer such a general question, especially as I don't fully understand the terms used in this definition. What is 'utilisation'? By 'access' do you mean access of producers to markets or of consumers to goods and services, or both? What's the practical difference between 'availability' and 'stability'?

Also it is problematic to generalise about rural areas, it depends so much on which part of the UK you're talking about, including the quality of existing transport links, amount of farming/small-scale growing currently underway, the presence of highly innovative projects and their potential to be replicated locally, the income level of the population (e.g. the ability to participate in veg box schemes, time available to participate in community-supported agriculture projects), current land use.

To give a general answer, for what it's worth, it is possible to characterise a UK rural community's food system as a combination of the fact that for most people there does not even seem to be a food security problem (all the supermarkets are well-stocked and cheap) and for those people who recognize that there is a problem, it is almost impossible to know where to start (e.g. with the fuel system, the distribution system, the marketing system...).

Rural areas are at a slight advantage in some ways because food growing skills have not been completely dismantled, so arguably the focus of work should relate to sharing skills quickly and effectively (whereas in cities the focus will be creating the skills from scratch). Rural areas are at a disadvantage in other ways because transporting food around these areas is very expensive, so in general rural food security implies a highly decentralised and location-specific low-carbon response with a highly innovative approach to transportation and distribution.

8. Do you know of any community-based food in/security assessment tools that have been used in the UK or other 'developed' country? If yes please elaborate.

No, No, No, No, No, No I dont, No, No, No, No, *no*

I don't understand the substantive difference between this question and question 2. The resources I listed for question 2 could be seen as 'tools' in that they provide a replicable methodology which in each case the originators would be very happy to share with others. For example the 'growing communities' website contains a 'foodzone' diagram showing what percentages and types of food need to come from certain distances from a community in order to established a more localised food system.

<http://transitionculture.org/wp-content/uploads/foodzone.jpg>

It's developed for an urban setting but could be easily adapted for a rural community.

Incidentally I wonder whether the focus of this scoping exercise on 'developed' countries is the right one, surely there has been some interesting food security work in developing countries?

I don't know of anyone developing tools like these. As you mentioned, I have discovered on the internet there are such tools around but not with CC and PO in mind.

9. If any community-based food in/security assessment tools were to be developed, which of the four issues above (access, availability, stability and utilisation) would be the most important to focus on and why

All of them,

Access and utilisation

Availability, if food is available, the rest can be worked out

Tools that use language that connects more with people.

Availability and stability. It is important that the UK consumer understands that without stability (for the reasons mentioned above) there will be a decline the availability of local, sustainable, ethical produce. Access may be a more important issue for developing countries.

the most serious and widespread threats in the medium term are for stability and availability of basic foodstuffs

Availability/stability. Because you can't access or utilise something that doesn't exist! And because I believe communities can pull together in difficult times to help with access and utilisation, but it's harder for communities to address the fundamentals of food production.

Utilisation

Can't answer this for the reasons given in question 7.

possibly utilization as this could be most influenced by local initiatives for change.

10. If any community-based food in/security assessment tools were to be developed, would you be interested in assisting with their development?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. by advising or inputting into their creation (Hay). (TMonmouth?) | Yes: Dyfi Valley Seedsavers, FUW, EAFL/Transition Norwich, Taranaki Environment Centre NZ, Dave Prescott |
| 2. by commenting upon them once developed | Yes: Sustainable Frome, (Transition Tring?), Dyfi Valley Seedsavers, FUW, EAFL/Transition Norwich, Transition Stroud?*, Taranaki Environment Centre NZ, Dave Prescott (Hay). (TMonmouth?), TLLandrindod Wells |
| 3. by trialling them once developed | Yes: Transition Presteigne, Sustainable Frome, (Transition Tring?) DyfiValley Seedsavers, Transition Forest Row, EAFL/Transition Norwich, Taranaki Environment Centre NZ, dave Prescott (Hay) (TMonmouth?) |
| TLLandrindod Wells. | |
| 4. by helping to publicising them once trialled | Yes: Transition Presteigne, (Transition Tring?), Dyfi Valley Seedsavers, FUW, Transition Forest Row, EAFL/Transition Norwich, Taranaki Environment Centre NZ, Dave Prescott (Hay)(TMonmouth?). |

Yes maybe – one or two individuals in our group might be interested in all of these points, but would need to know more, especially if funding was forthcoming to help us to do so?

I would be interested in helping with all four stages if the methodology and assessment tools were aligned with the TTT/Geofutures effort.

*I would love to but don't have the time. Possibly No.2

Dyfi valley SS

FUW, EAFL/TNorwich, Sust Frome, TTring, TStroud, Tpresteigne, TForest Row, Taranaki Environment Centre NZ, Hay on Wye, TMonmouth, TLLandrindod Wells

Any Other Comments:

I enjoyed your questionnaire although I could not really understand some of the questions. Its great you're doing this.

We are working on Stroudco, which we will pilot and if it works, enable others to copy. It is partly motivated by wanting to increase community food security. It is a community owned local food trading hub which could operate reasonably well with little oil use. The Soil Association has expertise and experience in helping CSAs. The funding for this is short term. It is hard to do this sort of development work without grant fundng.

This response received from Janine May, Taranaki Environment Centre, New Zealand (Janine is working on creating a community food auditing tool as part of a project to develop a bioregional database of environmental resources. She contacted me after speaking to Rob Hopkins of the Transition Network, who passed my details to her). A Questionnaire was not sent to her as it had too much of a UK bias, however I did ask her to respond to questions 8 and 10 of the questionnaire. Her response in its entirety is included below:

Hi Richard

What you are doing sounds really interesting. My first impressions are that it is more detailed in scope and a slightly different emphasis than the project I am working on, but I can see many links between the two.

I don't know of anyone developing tools like these [*]. As you mentioned, I have discovered on the internet there are such tools around but not with CC and PO in mind. (I have come up a similar situation with the database I am developing. There are many "green directories" existing but I have found none that are categorised in a way that give a true picture of what resources actually exist in a bioregion. They only give information about who is prepared to pay to be on the directory.)

The main difference I would see in the tools you want to create vs the existing ones would be that the CC/PO one would stress more local food production and resources (and ignore supermarkets) whereas existing tools take less into account where the food comes from. Slightly different definitions of "security" perhaps, and whether it is long-term (CC/PO) or short-term (disaster situations).

I imagine "officialdom" would not yet see the need for food security assessment tools, given there is still the global trade focus in politics, business and industry, but I do think there is a need for them with a CC/PO (ie: local/bioregional) basis. I would think if such tools were available then many Transition Town initiatives worldwide would use them (depending on cost, since most have little money!)

In terms of the project I am doing, I am essentially identifying the same things as these tools would be doing - where the local food growers, processors, transport, educators, etc are in our bioregion (as well as other categories) - and I am recording these initially on a database we have developed. In future this information on the database could be portrayed using GIS maps or similar. So if your auditing tools were available now, I would definitely want to use them as questionnaires for finding out this information. But our project has minimal funding so cost would impact on whether it would be possible or not.

If you develop the tools, I would definitely be interested in any/all of a,b,c,d, [**] especially if there is a link to the project I am doing. It may be that they are mutually helpful. In the meantime I will be drafting some simple questions and testing them out in the community.

I would happily recommend your project to others. After all here we are on opposite sides of the world, doing something very similar. For all we know there may be others wanting and searching for the same tools.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know how you get on or if you need any more information from me. These comments are my own, but I have forwarded this to one of the Environment Centre trustees also, as the project is being funded by them and I wish to keep them informed.

[* this answer is to question 8 and has been incorporated under that question's responses above]

[** these letters relate to Q10 and have been included under that question's response above]