

Catering Services Sustainable Food Policy



What is Sustainable Food?

The quality, nutritional value and sustainability of food has an increasingly high public profile and will become one of the factors by which our customers exercise choice when selecting their food provider. Healthier, more sustainable food at the University of Reading may help to encourage positive lifestyle changes outside the University for both students and staff, leading to a positive impact on health and well-being, as well as on the environment.

Why is sustainable food important?

The provision of food has a complex relationship with health and the environment, and universities have a significant opportunity to create benefits for their students and staff.

There is no single agreed definition of sustainable food, but the following details the key areas of concern which the University catering team want to address as part of a sustainable food strategy:

The Sustainable Development Commission describes sustainable food as food and drink that:

- is safe, healthy and nutritious, for consumers in shops, restaurants, schools, Universities etcetera
- provides a viable livelihood for farmers, processors and retailers, whose employees enjoy a safe and hygienic working environment whether in the UK or overseas
- respects biophysical and environmental limits in its production and processing, while reducing energy consumption and improving the wider environment
- respects the highest standards of animal health and welfare, compatible with the production of affordable food for all sectors of society

- supports rural economies and the diversity of rural culture, in particular through an emphasis on local products that keep food miles to a minimum

What Catering Services is doing:

Our menus are prepared using fresh and where possible seasonal ingredients by our chefs on campus. Our suppliers are nominated and regulated through our membership of TUCO (The University Caterer's organisation) and SUPC (Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium) or via local University contracts.

In our procurement we:

- Make decisions based on a balance between economic, social and environmental factors to achieve best value for money.
- Take account of whole life costs where applicable to ensure sustainability and minimise impact on the environment.
- Set specifications for products and services which include sustainable, renewable and recycled resources and processes and consider the end of life options to ensure minimal impact on the environment.
- Comply with legislation relating to sustainability and the environment.
- Encourage best practise in all areas of procurement.
- Work with suppliers to encourage better processes and improvements to the supply chain and the products and services supplied.
- Continue to develop the use of Fair Trade and other ethically traded products and services.
- Use seasonally available ingredients where possible, to minimise energy used in food production, transport and storage as per Appendix 1.
- Encourage Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's), local and regional suppliers to bid for supply agreements.
- Exclude fish species identified as most at risk by the Marine Conservation Society, and only use fish from sustainable sources, such as those accredited by the Marine Stewardship Council. All MCS fish chosen by catering services is nominated with suppliers and added to our core list of products that may be purchased by our staff.
- Communicate this policy to staff and students.
- This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the University's Catering and Hospitality Management Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and is made up of both academic, catering and student representatives, to ensure continual improvement.

In our menu development and food production we:

- Endeavour to reduce the amount of meat and dairy use and increase the number of vegetarian and vegan dishes available. (Membership and accreditation by the Vegetarian society) and achievement of the Good Pig and Good Chicken Award from Compassion in World Farming, for all fine dining.

- Provide healthy options
- Increase the use of seasonal vegetables and fruits and link to suppliers who provide monthly newsletters which are distributed to all catering managers and chefs. All catering units are to have available at least one seasonal fruit and one seasonal vegetable (where applicable).
- We only put sustainable fish on menus working to the MCS “fish to eat” list of fish. Catering Services will never purchase MCS “red listed” fish and are now MCS Accredited.
- Use of only Free Range whole and liquid eggs in all dishes produced by Catering Services. (Awarded Compassion in World Farming Good Egg Award)
- Reduce the number of artificial additives by production of menu items on site at our Central Kitchen.
- Reduce packaging and labelling via on site production at our Central Kitchen.
- Reduce delivery and transportation (food miles) by production on site from our Central Kitchen and then delivering to units on campus within planned delivery routes to reduce environmental impacts.
- Reduce delivery packaging by use of reusable delivery crates by Fruit and Vegetable supplier and Meat supplier.
- Reduction in the number of chemicals that are hazardous to the environment by the use of latest technologies in dishwashing machinery and careful measurement of chemicals through the use of automated dosing units.

Training

- To achieve improvements in the sustainability of food at the University, training is provided involving catering managers, catering procurement staff, chefs and Front of house food service staff.
- For chefs, training focuses on how high quality fresh seasonal food can be prepared, served and ultimately disposed of, to maximise health and sustainability benefits. Lists of seasonal products are distributed to chefs and unit supervisors to highlight preferred purchases.
- For catering managers and procurement staff, training covers the principles surrounding seasonality, carbon reduction and general awareness of environmental issues and support is given through the procurement contracts we have in place through the various consortia and also by sharing best practice with colleagues at other institutions (EG through membership of the SUPC and TUCO).
- For front-of-house food service staff, training covers the information that students, staff, and visitors may need to choose high quality, sustainable food through daily tool box talks.

Energy & Waste

- Food waste is separated from other waste streams and is loaded into corn starch sacks and is collected by our waste contractor. The food waste is converted into an energy source.
- Catering Services has attained a Gold Award in the Green Impact Scheme.
- Cooking oil is collected by 3663, one of our major suppliers of frozen and general groceries and is converted into bio fuel to run their fleet of vehicles and thus reducing carbon emissions.
- Coffee Waste is now offered to customers free of charge for their gardens.
- Plastic bottles, glass, Tetra pac, paper and cardboard are all recycled via our waste contractor and thus landfill is significantly reduced.
- Increase in the number of draught/keg bar lines to reduce the numbers of glass bottles.
- Reduce the use of water used in food production by removing taps in our Central Kitchen and having pull down hoses to prevent staff from leaving taps running. All hand wash sinks are on infra red taps to prevent water being wasted.
- All Kitchen and dining area air handling and ventilation systems are managed by the University's BMS (Building Management Systems) to prevent energy wastage.
- Catering Services will nominate Green Champions to work with the University's Clean & Green Team to reduce energy usage and environmental impacts that our business may generate. The University is recognised by the Carbon Trust for their commitment to reducing energy consumption.
- Adoption of new cooling & heating technologies to reduce energy consumption e.g. Smart Dispense Beer Units in smaller bars & Air-Sourced Heat Pumps at Park Eat.
- The University is Carbon Trust accredited for being committed to reducing Carbon Dioxide year on year.
- Investigating a system to vary the speed of ventilation to enable large savings to be achieved by slowing down ventilation when kitchens are in use but quiet.
- Big Catering Switch Off – a new initiative during closure & vacation periods aimed at getting staff to think about switching off as much equipment as possible

Ethical Trading

We aim to trade in an ethical and responsible manner when operating

- Members of Workers Rights Consortium working to improve work standards across the globe
- Fairtrade products widely adopted through our operations e.g. all coffee, tea.
- Our Bar Areas are accredited with the British Institute of Innkeepers, an organisation that aims to drive up standards in Licensed Trade.
- Range of local suppliers including Jennings of Caversham (Butcher), Haines Farm Eggs, Rebellion Brewery, Bug Amusements (Pool Tables) & Jungs Bakery

Further Information

If you wish to find out more on the topics discussed, we have put together a selection of interesting websites & links.

University of Reading Websites

Catering Services - www.reading.ac.uk/catering

The websites below are for other sections of the University for Academic, Research and Service Functions;

Agriculture - www.reading.ac.uk/apd/

Environment, Energy & Sustainability Team – www.reading.ac.uk/eest

Estates & Facilities – www.reading.ac.uk/fmd

Food & Nutritional Sciences – www.reading.ac.uk/food

Food Processing Centre (Academic Research) - www.reading.ac.uk/food-processing-centre/

Food Security - www.reading.ac.uk/food-security/

Geography & Environmental Sciences – www.reading.ac.uk/ges

National Centre for Earth Observation - www.nceo.ac.uk/

National Fruit Collection - www.nationalfruitcollection.org.uk

Soil Research Unit - <http://www.reading.ac.uk/soil-research-centre/>

Walker Institute - www.walker-institute.ac.uk/

External Websites

The University Caterers Organisation (TUCO) – www.tuco.org

3663 Food Service (supplier) - www.3663corporate.co.uk/cser

Adele Foods (supplier) - <http://www.adeliefoods.co.uk/responsibility/>

British Institute of Innkeepers– www.bii.org

Brakes (supplier) - www.brakesgroup.com/cser/pillars/environment/

Britvic (supplier)- www.britviclearningzone.com/production/environmental_impact/index.php

Carbon Trust - www.carbontrust.com

Compassion in World Farming - www.ciwf.org.uk

Diageo PLC (supplier) - www.diageo.com/en-row/CSR/Pages/default.aspx

Eat Out, Eat Well - www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=25352

Fairtrade Foundation – www.fairtrade.org.uk

Green Impact www.green-impact.org.uk

Heineken UK (supplier)- www.heineken.co.uk/responsibilities.php

Marine Stewardship Council - www.msc.org

Peros (supplier) - www.peros.co.uk/2c/corporate-social-responsibility

Red Tractor – www.redtractor.org.uk

Reynolds Greengrocers (supplier) - www.reynolds-cs.com/growing-responsibly/

Seasonal Produce - www.reynolds-cs.com/in-season/

Sustainable Development Commission - www.sd-commission.org.uk/

SmartDispense from Heineken - www.smartsavingscalc.com/about.html

Workers Rights Consortium - www.workersrights.org

Vegetarian Society - www.vegsoc.org

Signed on behalf of Catering Services

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