



BOLLINGTON CARBON REVOLUTION

Appendix 5: Reducing Impact of Food

Introduction

'Food miles' are the measure of the distance a food travels from field to plate, and in 2002 they represented 1.8% of the total annual UK carbon dioxide emissions. Agriculture and food now account for nearly 30% of goods transported on our roads, and the government has a target to reduce these food miles by 20% before 2010. This means that we need to buy local and buy seasonal.

Currently ninety-five per cent of the fruit and half of the vegetables consumed in the UK are imported. To give an idea of how far food travels, a typical basket of 26 imported organic foods may have travelled the distance of six times around the equator.

Consumers are also directly responsible for increased food miles. We now travel further for our shopping and use the car more often to do it. Each year, the average UK adult travels about 135 miles by car to shop for food, more often than not making trips to large, out-of-town supermarkets.

The individual consumer can make a difference right away. Simply walking to local shops, when possible, and buying fresh ingredients to cook at home has an impact. Organic food boxes and farmers markets are both proving to be increasingly popular as people consciously go to buy local and or organic food.

This chapter provides ideas through which the people of Bollington can reduce their food miles.

Method of research and list of sources

This research was carried out through the internet using a number of websites including:

www.sustainablestuff.co.uk/GrowingYourOwnFood.html

www.statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/default.asp

www.bbc.co.uk/food/food_matters/foodmiles.shtml

www.sustainablestuff.co.uk/BuyingLocalSeasonableFood.html

www.bbc.co.uk/food/food_matters/foodmiles.shtml

www.statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/default.asp

Cross-over with other headings

Waste, Communication, Funding

List of ideas

The following ideas indicates the extent of possibilities:

- Provision of local green grocers: Canvass interest for potential local business interest and market potential for a green grocer. Local farms could provide fruit and vegetables
- Explore the potential for a farmers market
- Education: Increased education will enhance village image, and support local businesses
- Involvement with schools: Especially given the recent Jamie Oliver campaign for real food in schools, and increasing pressure on state school meal provision
- Links with Doctors' surgery: Support the health and wellbeing of the village, could link in with the local doctor surgery and run healthy eating awareness campaign at the same time as the overall environmental campaign, should be integrated not standalone issues we deal with
- Provision of allotments: Increase in the number of allotments <http://www.allotments-uk.com/>. There are ten allotments in Bollington which, at the time of writing, have a waiting list of 12 people. The contact to put yourself onto the waiting list is r.johnson.bollington.tc@btconnect.com at Bollington Town Council
- Promote foraging: local residents could provide info on best places to find local free food. Although there are potential issues to deal with regarding H&S / litigation
- Sharing land / spare land for growing of food for the elderly or subsistence gardening
- Promote the organic food box service: Foodlife, 0161 486 1173, anna@foodlife-doorstepdeliveries.co.uk
- Promote milk delivery: www.findmeamilkman.net
- Promote growing your own vegetables. Information is available at www.recipes4us.co.uk/Growing%20Vegetables.htm and at www.farm-garden.com/growing-vegetables but basic ideas are as follows:
 - Broad Beans - can be planted in the autumn for an early spring crop and can be easily replaced with a summer vegetable such as runner beans. By alternating early (spring/summer) and late (autumn/winter) crops, space and yield can be maximised, reducing the need to supplement your crop with bought produce
 - Broccoli - as above, broccoli will produce an early crop in February/March, provided it is planted the previous April. This will involve planning ahead, but is a worthwhile way of enjoying this healthy vegetable
 - Brussel Sprouts and Parsnips - are planted in early spring for a late harvest. They are relatively hardy and are worth planting if you are in for a cold year
 - Carrots - can be sown in late February and harvested at different points of the year, depending on the variety

- Courgettes and French Beans - are sown in late May/Early June for a harvest that same summer and is, therefore, a good vegetable to start your garden off with, along with other quick growing summer crops
- Garlic - is planted in autumn for a late summer harvest
- Lettuce, spring onions and radishes - can be grown throughout the year and are sown and harvested every couple of weeks
- Onions 'sets' (small bunches of onions for planting) - are sown in the spring for an autumn harvest or, alternatively, can be planted in the winter for a late summer crop
- Potatoes - are an essential staple food and can be planted for three different crops: 1st early - plant March, harvested 2-3 months later; 2nd early - sow late March to early April, harvested 4 months later; Late Crop - sown first half of April to late April, harvested 4-5 months later
- Runner Beans - are planted in early June and can be harvested in the same summer. As runner beans are grown upright on canes, they need relatively little space
- Tomatoes - will yield a good harvest throughout the summer if the seeds are sown in a pot or seed tray towards the end of April and transferred to a sunny part of the garden in early summer

Funding required

Funding will primarily be required to communicate out the message. If a farmers market is a possibility then start-up funding will be required to run the market.

Potential funding for farmers markets is available through DEFRA's Rural Enterprise Scheme for farmers and a range of other rural businesses (partnerships and companies) and rural communities.

Recommendations for action

- Explore potential for green grocers and farmers market
- Raise awareness of food miles, using schools and doctors surgery as a focus
- Lobby for an increase in allotments
- Explore a garden sharing scheme
- Promote the organic delivery box scheme and milk delivery
- Promote foraging

Possible methods of collecting data

We need to collect data to demonstrate impact and improvement. This could be collected through a house-to-house survey, or through the schools.

We need to record current buying habits, awareness of the issue of food miles and willingness to buy local.