

Sustainable Food – The Action Plan 2021

Introduction

Overarching Aims

We aim to carry out food and drink procurement and service delivery in a manner that enhances positive social, ethical and environmental benefits whilst also encouraging and promoting healthy eating. We strive to incorporate sustainability including carbon impacts into our product and service selection process. We will actively seek to engage with all stakeholders and customers in the continued development of healthy and sustainable food.

Strategic Objectives

The University acknowledges its responsibility to engage in procurement and service delivery practices that are environmentally and socially sustainable, while encouraging and promoting healthy eating. This document details the steps we are taking to ensure this occurs across all aspects of our supply chains and services as well as being integrated into the wider culture of food at the University. We recognise our responsibility to engage our suppliers to minimise negative environmental and social impacts associated with the manufacture of their products and services. We will buy from reputable suppliers choosing local supply chains where appropriate.

The quality, nutritional value and sustainability of food has an increasingly high public profile and will become one of the factors by which students and staff exercise choice when selecting their food choices. Healthier, more sustainable food at Bristol University 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 our environment. Different priorities tend to overlap in relation to the production of food. For example, the need to reduce the consumption of meat for environmental reasons coincides with reducing meat consumption for health. There are similar targets in many different sections of this document for this reason.

Social value

Sustainable food has a large part to play in ensuring the University meets its obligations under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 as well as its moral and ethical obligations as a Higher Education Institution. Social Value represents an opportunity for suppliers to indicate specific contributions that they can make toward supporting the University's objectives and to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the city of Bristol and the surrounding region. Moreover, social value is not limited to suppliers and supply chains, but is also practiced through provision, research, learning, and leadership as laid out in this plan.

Wellbeing, health, and nutrition

Food systems are inherently connected to the wellbeing of individuals and communities involved in production and consumption of food and more broadly, the wellbeing of ecosystems and non-human communities. These are also interconnected with climate change, as food systems are both affected by and can impact climate change, and this will have an impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. The University is therefore committed to providing sustainable food in line with these values and environmental and ethical commitments. The sustainable food needs to be beneficial to the health of the planet as well as individuals. Therefore, nutrition as well as environmental concerns must take priority when determining how sustainable a food practice is.

Scope 3 emissions from catering

As part of the University's commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2030 we are striving to map and reduce our scope 3 carbon emissions that emerge from catering practices. The first steps we have taken to reduce our catering emissions have been to introduce meat-free Mondays, removing beef from retail outlets and reducing ruminant meat from all our menus. As catering resources develop, including tools to measure scope 3 carbon emissions, we aim to further address this issue.

Food/Drink Waste and Community Gardens,

The University of Bristol aims to take an innovative approach to our catering practices. This ranges from repurposing components of food that may have previously been considered food waste, such as banana peels and coffee grounds to completely banning plastic bottles. In the future, we envision taking similar innovative steps to catering practices.

We have made significant efforts to increase the accessibility of a variety of drinks across campus. One of our most notable achievements is the stopping of selling plastic drinks containers as well as all of our cooking oil being converted into biofuel. This has included providing dairy milk alternatives in all of our Halls of Residence and Cafes and increasing access to refillable water bottle points as part of the City to Sea refill scheme.

Innovation of Food and Dietary Requirements

The University will strive to be innovative with the food that is produced and will seek to be well informed with food trends. We recognise that there are a wide variety of dietary requirements across the University that must be met due to a wide range of reasons including health, wellbeing, preference and faith.

While unsustainable palm oil farming is environmentally destructive, sustainable palm oil is an extremely useful natural oil and more efficient than other similar oils. We will work on reducing unhealthy oils and fats and replace with more sustainable healthy options.

Climate Change

In 2019, the University declared a Climate Emergency and is currently aiming towards being carbon neutral by 2030. Sustainable food plays an important role in these plans as it is a way that everyone can actively engage in climate mitigation measures on a daily basis. By raising sustainability awareness through food, we can help to facilitate a culture of Sustainability at the University which will help to lower our wider impact on the environment.

Objectives

- The University will achieve Fairtrade University status with the Fairtrade Foundation by March 2022 for all of its food related activities in partnership with stakeholders for non-food related Fairtrade activity.
- We will reduce all ruminant meats from its offerings from 2021, starting with beef being removed from all café & retail outlets.
- We will deliver 'eat in' retail units with zero single use packaging for fresh food offerings from 2022 by promoting reuse, deposit return schemes with evidential whole life costings.
- Vegan and Vegetarian food will be increased by 10% in all food offerings by 2022.
- We will map carbon related to all food and drink offerings and reduce it by 20% by 2023, through a number of ways including meat-based meals, transport and processing, thus encouraging use of local seasonal and plant-based foods.
- We will work to reduce the sugar in the foods we retail, prepare and serve by 10% by 2022.

Actions For 2021

- Remove the sale of all drinks in plastic bottles
- Run Fairtrade activities to promote the importance of these schemes (Fairtrade.org, fairforlife, fairlife etc).
- Introduce deposit return schemes in all Source Café outlets
- Promote the environmental & health benefits of plant-based foods supported by staff & student campaigns
- Run education campaigns encouraging staff and students to carry out carbon footprint monitoring/reducing
- Streamline offerings and pricing for non-dairy based milks to ensure they are accessible to all, re-imagining traditional dairy as a supporting role
- We will be transparent about our food sourcing and preparation
- We will proactively engage our supply chain in our sustainability criteria and report on KPI's
- We will review accreditation schemes, such as the sustainable restaurant association and soil association accreditation etc to pursue the most applicable scheme for the University's activities

The Plan

The plan for how the above actions will be achieved is laid out in the following tables under the headings sourcing, provision, practice, development and leadership:



The Plan: Sourcing

We will source food and drink that is produced to environmental, social and economically sustainable standards by:

Fruit & Veg

- Our suppliers are nominated and regulated through our membership of TUCO (The University Caterers Organisation) and SUPC (Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium). We will increase the amount of local and LEAF certified produce.

Meat, Fish & Dairy

- Reduce the amount of animal-based produce served and lead with messaging around sustainable choices. Ruminant meats, are more carbon intensive and we will reduce the use of these supporting health and environmental benefits.

Local

- Strive to increase the amount of local food that is procured, whether it be produced in our kitchens or using local suppliers.

Organic

- Work towards increasing the amount of organic food procured by regular review of product lines.

Fair Trade

- By continuing to source Fairly traded products and ingredients the University is helping to support farmers across the globe. Fairtrade focuses on increasing farmer's resilience to climate change, aligned with the University's goals.

Oils & Soya

- We will increase the amount of sustainable palm oil and responsible soya in our sourced products.

Drinks

- We will continue to make healthy and sustainable choices in product ranges.

Culture & Education

- We will continue to purchase sustainable packaging such as compostable options, and source options being mindful of whole life cycle.

The Plan: Provision

We will provide good value, high quality, healthy and sustainable food that meets dietary needs and enhances wellbeing by:

Fruit & Veg

- We will increase vegetable quantity in meat-heavy dishes such as burgers or mince as this benefits health and the environment. Providing generous portions of fruit, vegetables and whole grains enhancing healthy food availability.

Meat, Fish & Dairy

- We will move to more meat-free options (utilising meat free days), provide a range of plant-based choices and explore the options of changing the default milk in hot drinks to a plant-based options.

Local, Organic & Fair Trade

- We will improve the messaging of local and organic food within our Point of Sale information. We will increase the range of products and supply more point of sale information to increase the FairTrade presence in people's minds especially during 'FairTrade Fortnight'.

Health

- Promoting healthy eating is a key tenant of this Sustainable Food Plan and drives our decision making. We have taken steps to promote health by cutting down on fats and oils and increasing the number of our healthy meal deals.

Plants

- As the uptake of low-carbon diets increases we will promote plant based options normal within our catering offers. We will make vegan options more prominent, and increase the variety of meat-free packaged sandwiches in our cafes.

Drinks

- Hot drinks in our cafes are sold at a discounted rate to those who bring their own reusable keep up, which reduces waste. Engaging in City to Sea 'Refill Bristol' campaign we promotes access to water refills as well as reducing plastic waste.

Culture & Education

- Training catering managers, chefs and front-of-house staff on how to best provide sustainable and nutritious food will support creating a culture of health and sustainable food helping achieve all of our goals.

Food Waste

- We will place a focus on ensuring that food waste is dealt with in a sustainable manner through campus wide food waste campaigns. This initiative may involve 'no tray' days in Halls of Residence Dinning Halls.

The Plan: Practice

We will act responsibly towards the environment and people employed in our supply chains, and we will influence our suppliers to do the same, by:

Suppliers

- All third-party suppliers are chosen after a comprehensive evaluation of their sustainability credentials considering environmental, social and economic factors. We will design menu's to reflect fresh, seasonal produce

Fruit & Veg

- We strive to use seasonal products where possible, will reduce portion size and emphasise calorie quality over quantity to support our health and sustainability ethos.

Meat, Fish & Dairy

- We will reduce ruminant meat starting with removing beef from café & retail outlets. Livestock farming is a significant contributor to climate change. We commit to reducing the amount of foods from animal origin (meat, fish, dairy and eggs).

Local & Organic

- We aim to buy products that support our local community and if we can't buy local, we'll aim to buy products that support other communities accredited by the Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark.

Fair Trade

- We work with suppliers to increase and broaden lines of Fairtrade and other fairly traded products which are key to ensuring we act responsibly towards people and planet with our suppliers, aiming to become a Fairtrade University.

Oils & Soya

- All waste kitchen oil is made into biofuel and we hope to reduce our overall oil consumption in the coming years. We will reduce the amount of oil and hydrogenated vegetable oils used in cooking; choosing healthier and more sustainable oils.

Energy & Water

- Reducing our energy and water usage is a vital part of the University Carbon Free by 2030 strategy. We aim to replace equipment with water-saving and energy efficient options and liaise with suppliers to improve the efficiency of water during production.

Drinks

- Mains water drinking facilities have been installed in key locations promoted through the Refill Bristol campaign; and we aim to serve 50% of drinks in reusable containers (we reached 42% in 2018/2019) and aim to reduce it by 30% by 2022.

Culture & Education

- Menus are designed with the cross utilisation of products in mind. Food is ordered daily to reduce the levels of food waste by just in time use of raw ingredients. We are listed on the 'To Good To Go' app which reduces food waste through food sharing.

The Plan: Development

We will support initiatives that deepen understanding, collaboration and action on sustainable food by:

Local & Organic

- The university aims to connect with students and other stakeholders to effectively support student led planting projects, take action on organic food issues and implement the most appropriate recommendations from stakeholders.
- We will endeavour to have a holistic approach to choosing our supplies and products, looking at the impact of supply and demand balancing local versus global markets.

Fair Trade

- We currently engage students and staff in Fairtrade campaigns and events. We aim to create a steering group within a wider sustainable food action group and create additional educational opportunities by inviting speakers to discuss Fairtrade at one off events. Ultimately, we aim to implement Fairtrade in the curriculum through the group and become a Fairtrade University.

Health

- While we already provide healthy food options, these need to be communicated more effectively to encourage positive lifestyle changes for our whole community, leading to a positive impact on health and well-being, as well as on our environment.
- We aim to ensure there is sufficient nutritional information available at point of purchase and promote the health benefits of plant-based.
- In the future we will develop student cooking lessons and support student led projects to ensure a sustainable legacy.

Plants

- We currently promote less meat Mondays and aim to move to encouraging less meat at every meal time by changing the way protein is viewed. We aim to engage with the food research group to consider how best to share information around the benefits of a plant-based diet. We will use social media to share how carbon is connected to the food system. We will implement other appropriate actions as recommended by the food research group and other stakeholders.

The Plan: Leadership

We will seek to show leadership by adopting transparent and inclusive policies and practices that reflect our institutional values and aspirations by:

Fair Trade

- We currently run Fairtrade activities to promote the importance of fair trade schemes and support the South West Fairtrade Network. We aim to set up a Fairtrade University Steering Group (within the Sustainable Food Action Group) and work with the food research group to implement education and curriculum changes. Ultimately, we aim to become a Fairtrade Accredited University.

Food Groups

- A Food Development action group will be created early in 2021 with guest members invited from across the University. The action group will discuss food trends and ensure that the sustainability goals set out in the Sustainable Food Plan are woven into the development of food and menus.
- Additionally a 'Sustainable Food and Student Society Forum' has launched in January 2021 which will challenge the Catering department to change norms and deliver the 'Sustainability Action Plan' goals

Awards

- We currently support the South West Fairtrade Business Awards and won three silver awards in 2019. We are working towards achieving Fairtrade University status. We have received the Good Egg award for our use of free-range eggs in catered halls of residence, functions, cafes and delivered food, and aim to maintain this level of attainment. In the future, we will work with the Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark, Sustainable Restaurants award and MSC accreditation. These awards provide an independent guarantee that what is on your menu is freshly prepared, free from undesirable additives and better for animal welfare and ensures that fish is sustainably sourced.