Lessons from Across the Atlantic: Policy Faultlines and Policy Possibilities on Sustainable Diets

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Introduction & overview

• The food system is in trouble – in DCs and LDCs
• C20th brought advances with costs but where to now?
• ‘Sustainable diets’ is not a new idea; a modern version of an old debate about environmental limits and what is a good food system
• This paper summarises thinking & actors in Europe
• It shows a process building up but no ‘lift off’ yet
• Jostling different foci: sustainable diets, food, security, systems.
Who is engaging in Europe?

Civil society
Professions
Government
Commerce
Civil society

Pan EU NGOs
UK NGOs
Professions
Engagement by civil society / NGOs: enviro, health, consumers, animals

- **EU level:**
  - Consumers International / BEUC argue for (health focus)
  - labelling as policy instrument for behaviour change
  - Greenpeace: Amazon-soya-pigs-diet connection
  - WWF: *One Planet Diet* - UK, France, Spain, Sweden:
    [http://livewellforlife.eu/](http://livewellforlife.eu/)
  - Strong animal welfare movement at MS and EU level (meat)

- **UK**
  - ‘eat less meat’ campaigns: CIWF, WWF, FoE
  - experiments eg Fife Diet (Vancouver 100 mile diet)
    [http://www.fifediet.co.uk/](http://www.fifediet.co.uk/)
  - Which?/CA: Future of Food process/report 2012:
    - the more consumers learned the more concerned they become
Complex labelling is possible:
OmniStandards in a label + traffic lights
source: Sustain ©
Consumer information sharing apps (not just EU!)

• A focus on transparency through social media networks / a food knowledge role / sharing inform’n
• They illustrate virtual-led culture change
• There are 3 broad modes:
NGO overview

• A process of bubbling ‘democratic experimentalism’
  – Sustain: www.sustainweb.org.uk
  – Sustainable Diet Coalition forming in UK (2012ff)

• Reaching limits of conventional information/ labels?
  – Full labelling being too complex; can lead to ‘blame the consumer’? EU extension of EcoLabel dropped anyway
  – Massive consumer skilling required?
  – What cultural messages? More than ‘greening’ 5-a-day?

• Key tension between choice (consumers in control) and choice-editing (production frames choice)
The professions / sciences
What about the Professions? (1)

• Nutrition slow but accelerating engagement:
  – UK Nutrition Society 2012
  – Barilla Center, Bocconi Univ, Italy (2009--)
  – Aberdeen University for Scottish Govt

• Agricultural Science:
  – Clash between 2 policy narratives: ‘productivity’ and ‘sufficiency’ (how much is enough?)
  – Rallying around ‘sustainable intensification’?
Professions (2)

• Engineers:
  – Resource-focus
  – technological solutions eg waste → digesters on-farm

• Social Science:
  – Sustainable Consumption Institute (£25m Tesco funded at Manchester Univ) – warning consumers of change http://www.sci.manchester.ac.uk/
Issues arising from Professions/sciences

• Some engagement
• Disciplinary fragmentation /nervousness interdisciplinarity
• Follow research funding
• Research agenda EU funding dominated? Some foundations engaging now
• Some focus on ‘low carbon and healthy’
• Experience of long time to deliver frameworks outside project-based work
  – Eg Eurodiet (3 yrs process inside ONE profession!)
Commerce

Carbon focus
LCA Methodology
Export-led growth (new paradigm?)
Some movement by companies

• International companies:
  – 2002: SAI launched Groupe Danone, Nestlé, Unilever
  – 2009: B30 top TNCs initiative Coca-Cola, Tesco, Unilever
  – 2010-11: World Economic Forum roadmap

• UK companies:
  – 2007: IGD Food Industry Sustainability Strategy
    Champions Group focus on low carbon + ethics
  – 2008: Tesco gives £25m † Manchester SCI
  – 3 retailers’ choice-edit M&S Plan A, Co-operative Group, Waitrose
  – Unilever, PepsiCo brand sustainability strategies

• A product specific approach, not overall diet
Commercial sector / companies

• FoodDrinkEurope (2012): *Environmental Sustainability Vision Towards 2030*
  – Focus on waste, resources, efficiency
  – Solutions: product design, technology, consumer engagement, marketing for behaviour change, charity (food banks)
  – Tripartite stakeholder European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table: [www.food-scp.eu](http://www.food-scp.eu)
  – EU support for Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy (KBBE)
Barilla Centre: combining nutrition with environment gains

Issues arising

• No Sust Diet commercial framework yet
  – Individual company leadership held back by lack of framework?
  – some organising by big Fd Cos – IGD, FDE, B20, SAI

• Emerging themes around redefining efficiency

• Uncertainty about Business Model:
  – Cost cutting or Circular economy + waste reduction?

• Complexity of 27 MS market (450 m people)

• Political domination of eurozone crisis
Government (EU / 27 MSs)

European Union
Sustainable Consumption & Production (old thinking?)
Resource efficiency (new thinking?)
EU general approach relevant to SustDiet

1. UN Sustainable Consumption and Production
   – Marrakech process (post Rio 1992 ‡ Johannesburg 2002 CSD)
   – Focus on products / LifeCycleAnalysis (LCA) / Sustainable lifestyles

2. CAP slowly changing (situation normal)
   – Shift from paying for production to environmental goods

3. EU Platform for Action on Diet, PA and Health (parallel to SCP)
   – focus on NCDs / Consumer information/ But weak so far on Sust’il Consumption in food; Food Information regulation (2011) / focus on ingredients not impact / years arguing Nutrition labels

4. Commercial focus on products not health:
   – Integrated Product Policy (IPP) focus on enviro’t eg waste
     – http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ipp/integratedpp.htm

5. Focus on Carbon and Waste reduction as efficiency
Sustainable Food: General EU developments 2008-13 – phase 1

• **Sustainable Consumption-Production & Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan (2008)**
  – Framework inherited from Rio 92, Jo’burg 2002
  – Set up framework but nothing specific on food except obesity

• Oakdene Hollins (2011) *Ecolabel* rept to EC
  – Explored feasibility of extending (organic oriented) Ecolabel to wider carbon issues etc

• **European Food Sustainable Consumption Production (SCP) Roundtable (2009ff)**
  – co-chairs DG Environment & European Food & Feed Trade Associations. Based in FoodDrinkEurope & supported by EU’s JRC
Sustainable Food phase 2 (2011ff)

- **Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe** (2011)
  - Signals shift of thinking from SCP to resources

- **Building Single Market for Green Products** (2013)
  - EC Communiqué establishes two methods to measure environmental performance throughout the lifecycle, the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and the Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF)

- **DG Environment & JRC (2011 -2012):** *Harmonised framework methodology for the calculation of the environmental footprint of products.*

- **Consultation / stocktaking November 2012:**
  - [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/sustainable-food_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/sustainable-food_en.htm)
EU policy development for consumer/citizens

- Rio 1992: EU offers to lead on SCP
  - Sweden takes the lead
- Roadmap for resource-efficient Europe (2011) – set ambitious milestone for 2020: providing the right incentives for citizens and public authorities to choose the most resource efficient products through appropriate price signals and clear environmental information.
- SCAR 3rd report (2011):
- Waste reduction as resource efficiency eg EP resolution (Jan 2012):
- EC Communication on Sustainable Food, autumn 2013?
- No Eurobarometer on sustainability & food yet
Issues arising

• EU health role limited to information & education
  – Sust Diet label not pursued - due to inappropriate link to organic?
  – This has driven EU into arms of weak policy: PPPs
• Simultaneously, EC has shifted from SCP to LCA
  – ie from broad to specific
  – Focus on carbon and waste
• Current search for measurement (LCA widened?)
• This is a drift towards accepting choice-editing
  – Is the Roundtable approach gradually becoming irrelevant?
  – Policy reflex ‘Leave it to Carrefour, Tesco et al?’
• Policy is being shaped by production (DG Agri) more than consumption or health (DG Sanco)
Governments (Member States)

Northern Europe

F, D, NL, S, UK
Sweden takes the lead

• Offers evidence-based eco-nutrition guidelines (May 2009)
• Now submitted to the European Commission
• Joint work by National Food Administration & Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
• Other input (e.g. Swedish Board of Fisheries)
• Framed around eco-conscious consumers, rather than population
• Focus on key food groups
## Northern Europe emerging Govt policy advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organization/Proposal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) &amp; National Consumer Council</td>
<td>Sustainable Consumption “I will if you will” – generic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2008 -</td>
<td>German Council for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Sustainable Shopping Basket: includes food – lists labels and schemes (3rd ed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sustainable Consumption-Production &amp; Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan</td>
<td>Voluntary initiatives – but little food focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>LNV Ministry – Policy outline for achieving Sustainable Food</td>
<td>Sustainable food production &amp; consumer educ. campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>National Food Administration (&amp; Swedish EPA) – notification to EU (withdrawn 2011)</td>
<td>Environmentally friendly food choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>SDC, Council of Food Policy Advisors ‡ Dept Environment Food Rural Affairs (Defra)</td>
<td>Recommend defining low impact (sustainable) healthy diet</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Agrimonde study</td>
<td>Security focus but flags consumer change</td>
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UK

Rapid engagement post 2007-08 commodity price spike
Narrowing since 2010
Devolved Gov’t: Scotland, Wales, N Ireland
Cabinet Office 2008 report:
first major review since post WW2?
UK policy development: background

• 1970s – joining Europe: CAP
• 1980s – food safety and NCDs
• 2000s – environmental efficiency
  – Curry Commission
• 2007-08 – commodity & food price
  – Food Matters
• 2008-10 – policy acceleration: systems shift
• 2010: restriction driven by fiscal tightening
Specific UK policy development (2007 ff)

• Labour (2007-10)
  – Cabinet Office (2008): Food Analysis (Jan); Food Matters (July)
  – Climate Change Act (2008): set 80% reduction in GHGs by 2050:
  – Council of Food Policy Advisors 2009: 1\textsuperscript{st} report calls for sustainable dietary advice
  – Food Standards Agency Integrated Advice to Consumers project (Jan 2010):
    http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/iacreport.pdf
  – SDC (2009): Setting the Table – Enviro + Health are congruent
    • http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1033
  – Defra Food 2030 (Jan 2010):
UK policy 2010-15: narrower?

• *Food 2030 / IAC / CFPA / all closed down*
• Climate Change Act (2008) continues (binding law)
• Responsibility Deals take over (2010ff):
  – 4 ‘Deals’: Food (Obesity), Physical Activity, Alcohol, Work
  – Onus on CSR / CR; self-policing
• **Green Food Project 2011-12**
  – Focus on increasing competitiveness while protecting the environment [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-food-project-conclusions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-food-project-conclusions)
  – Focus on few key production sectors
  – Environment is driver rather than health
Devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, N Ireland

• Scotland (2008ff)
  – Food & Drink strategy 2009 (SNP Govt): ‘Sustainable economic growth’ fudges health (whisky + colas industry)?
  – Towards Healthier and More Environmentally Sustainable Food and Drink in Scotland (2012)
    • Draft Framework for Joining Up Decision Making
    • Working within UK CO2 reduction targets
    • Soft levers: 4 E’s- Enable, Encourage, Engage, Exemplify

• Wales – Food for Wales, Food from Wales
  http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/foodandfisheries/foodpolicyandstrategy/foodstrategyforwales/?lang=en

• N Ireland – on/off process – food in schools etc; no big picture

• Common themes:
  – industry (farming, industry, public catering)
  – Working within wider parameters (UK / EU eg climate change)
  – Soft on consumption issues
  – Soft on health
Issues arising (UK & Northern MSs)

• Choice/choice-editing is key faultline
• No overall food system perspective
• Key driver is climate change (EU lead; hard targets)
• Fear of tackling the consumer
  – “we can choice-edit for 10 yrs, then it needs consumers to change”
• Rising concern about skills
  – Cooking, storing, shopping
• National political differences of emphasis
• EU tortoise / UK hare?
Where next - Towards Sustainable Diet Guidelines (SDGs)?

Possible processes
Defining and delivering
Rethinking Brundtland’s triple focus
Arguments against SDGs

• Environment (CO2e) is not nutrition’s problem
• SDs are trojan horse for anti-meat & dairy lobby (veggies)
• Too complicated (let markets/prices sort this)
• Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) are OK
  – hard fought for and recognised tool in policy-making
  – backed by WHO and FAO (bridge between them)
  – symbolise scientific knowledge’s triumph over ‘unscientific’ cultural knowledge
• Human physiology and nutrition needs are the same everywhere. SD thinking muddles this.
• But these are not reasons to shift to Sust Diets
  – Evidence build-up is too strong
  – Industry is moving this way and many want new frameworks
  – Consumer pressure for guidance
The case for SDGs is that they....

- Provide a rational basis to the general food policy framework which is good for public and supply
- Reconnect nutrition with agri-food
- Bridge the gap between NCD and CO\(_2\)e discourses
- Re-set moral/political drivers for interdisciplinary research
- Recalibrate institutions around consumer needs
- Provide new basis for public advice and supply chain goals: what to eat + how to consume + how produced
What process options for SDGs?

• **Public policy (government-led)**
  – WHO, FAO, UNEP do a joint high level report – ICN 2013?
  – Intergovernmental Panel on Sustainable Diets - like IPCC?
  – A consortium of governments – a N EU consortium?
  – EU itself – EC create a process from Eurodiet to SustEuroDiet?
  – A consortium of agencies

• **Professions-led:**
  – Interdisciplinary Working Grp: Science & Social Science – FCRN?
  – Foundations-led: eg Wellcome+Gates‡ ATNI?

• **Commerce /corporations-led:**
  – Corporate Responsibility (eg Barilla Centre)
  – Sust Diet Labelling - carbon labels

• **Civil Society:**
  – Consumer culture campaigns (eg WWF One Planet Diet)
  – UK Sustainable Diet Coalition
If not now, perhaps in coming crises?

• World Food (In)Security pressures
  – Commodity trade; speculation (see: UNCTAD 2012);
• Internal systems ‘boiling-over’: (Tipping Points bk, OUP 2013)
  – price volatility already difficult (post 2008)
  – Climate change kicks in faster than politicians expect
  – Oil prices (‡ biofuel commitments)
  – Land grabs (‡ UN Special Rapporteur report)
  – Global Obesity rates (‡ WHA 2003 + CSR ie not much)
• Potential ‘boil-dry’ moments – social instability:
  – Prices? ‡ social unrest
  – Water? ‡ crop shortage
  – Migration? ‡ labour
  – Geo-political turmoil? ‡ wars
The case for government leadership on sustainable diets (5 mins with the President)

• There is no need to be frightened; evidence-led
• Government as facilitator
• Organised change is better than enforced change
• Self-interest coincides with eco-systems health
• Embryonic shifts are underway by companies
• Sustainable diets warrant exploration even if you don’t deliver them now (garbage can theory)
• Talk children and parental interests in the future
The scientific task itself

- Build the evidence base for policy
- Create better integrated food systems analyses
- Model total food systems scenarios and options
- Include social sciences (to temper some natural science tendencies to neo-Malthusianism!)
- Do better data summaries for policy-makers
- More focus on rich societies – we are the problem
Refining what we mean by sustainability: move on from Malthus

- Malthus: environment determines capacity
- Food revolution expanded production by mining eco-systems and resources
- Hot Springs 1943 set the policy framework
- Brundtland 1987 tried to recalibrate
  - Sustainable Devt: environment + economy + society
- We now need something more precise (SDC 2011)
- Something to redefine food progress
UK Sustainable Development Commission 2011 report proposed sustainability as a complex set of ‘poly-values’

http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1187

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Social values</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Taste</td>
<td>• Pleasure</td>
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<td>• Seasonality</td>
<td>• Identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cosmetic</td>
<td>• Animal welfare</td>
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<td>• Fresh (where appropriate)</td>
<td>• Equality &amp; justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Authenticity</td>
<td>• Trust</td>
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<td>• Choice</td>
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<td>• Skills (citizenship)</td>
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<td>• Climate change</td>
<td>• Safety</td>
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<td>• Energy use</td>
<td>• Nutrition</td>
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<td>• Water</td>
<td>• Equal access</td>
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<td>• Land use</td>
<td>• Availability</td>
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<td>• Soil</td>
<td>• Social status/ affordability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity</td>
<td>• Information &amp; education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Waste reduction</td>
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<td>• Food security &amp; resilience</td>
<td>• Science &amp; technology evidence base</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Affordability (price)</td>
<td>• Transparency</td>
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<td>• Efficiency</td>
<td>• Democratic accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• True competition &amp; fair returns</td>
<td>• Ethical values (fairness)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jobs &amp; decent working conditions</td>
<td>• International aid &amp; development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fully internalised costs</td>
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1. The Dynamics of Ecological Public Health: A simple model

We have much to do!

Thank you!

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