

## **Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative**

# **Guidance for buyers and their internal customers**

**Advice for public sector bodies on integrating sustainable  
development into food and catering services contracts**

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The **Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative** (PSFPI) – supported by the Prime Minister – is designed to help the Government deliver its Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (SFFS). This aims to achieve a world-class sustainable farming and food sector that contributes to a better environment and healthier and prosperous communities.

Public sector procurement can make a big difference, as it accounts in England for over £1.8 billion on food supply and catering services. This is why we want public sector organisations to work with the farming, food producing and processing industry and the supply chain to ensure that the objectives of the PSFPI are met in their catering operations, e.g. in hospitals, military establishments, prisons, schools, meals on wheels and homes for the elderly. This requires buyers, specifiers and catering managers to consider the impacts of all the ingredients of the food consumed – not just fresh produce.

Five priority objectives are

1. Raise production and process standards
2. Increase tenders from small and local producers
3. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene
4. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply
5. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand

Related objectives include:

- Increase demand for organic food (linked to raising production standards – see above)
- Improve choice for ethnic minorities
- Reduce waste
- Better working conditions for catering staff
- Treat suppliers fairly
- Improve data collection and measurement of performance.

All these objectives are covered in guidance on Defra's web site, which also contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that supplement this guidance and best practice case studies. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/index.htm>.

Likely benefits of the PSFPI include:

- UK rural local economies more sustainable
- Small and medium sized suppliers more competitive
- Animal welfare improved
- Healthier happier communities
- Better performing students and workforce
- More sustainable environment
- Savings from waste minimisation and reduced hospital stays
- Diversity of ethnic and religious groups catered for.

## **PART 2: POLICY & PRACTICE**

### **Government policy on public sector food procurement**

1. The Government is encouraging UK public sector bodies to pursue sustainable development objectives when delivering food and catering services. Central Government departments in England and their agencies are already committed to do this through departmental action plans. This guidance will help buyers and their internal customers understand the issues and apply measures that are designed to facilitate implementation of this policy while adhering to good procurement practice and achieving value for money.
2. Procurement strategies and contract specifications should be developed to reflect this policy. Value for money, probity and compliance with regulations are paramount considerations but buyers should make use of the possibilities for legitimately pursuing a sustainable food policy within this framework. This policy has the backing of the Prime Minister.

### **Hierarchy of key priorities**

3. Defra has identified the following priorities, while recognising that the main sustainability impacts in food supply may be in processing, packaging or distribution and not just at the stage of producing raw materials. Government bodies should:
  - i. as a baseline, require suppliers to meet appropriate assurance standards (e.g. Red Tractor scheme or equivalent);
  - ii. operate in a way which takes account of the main sustainable development priorities set out in the Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy and elsewhere, which are:
    - Supporting local and regional economies
    - Resource efficiency (particularly energy use)
    - Reducing waste (particularly packaging)
    - Improving nutrition
  - iii. make premium standard options available to consumers where there is scope to do so, e.g. in catering contracts. Organic products should be a priority here. Fairly traded goods should also be made available whenever possible.
4. The priorities are not static and Defra will review them in the light of experience and related developments, e.g. to assurance schemes.
5. Defra recognises that more work is required to help buyers and, for example, has produced a draft "*Catering Services and Food Procurement Toolkit*" - at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/tools.htm> - to help public sector bodies specify PSFPI objectives, running programmes to raise awareness and arranging a further series of regional training seminars with the Government Offices.

### **Government policy on farming and food**

6. The Government's policy is set out in the *Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in England – facing the future*. It sets out how industry, Government and consumers can work together to secure a sustainable, world-class farming and food sector contributing to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities. URL: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/default.htm>.

7. This is in line with its strategy for sustainable development within the UK ([http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/uk\\_strategy/index.htm](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/uk_strategy/index.htm)) to improve people's quality of life through:
  - Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone
  - Effective protection for the environment
  - Prudent use of natural resources and
  - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
8. Within the legal and policy framework for public procurement, Government departments can take relevant sustainable development issues into account and encourage innovation and the supply of environmentally preferable goods and services.

## Public procurement rules

9. The Government's public procurement policy requires all purchases of goods and services to be based on value for money, having due regard to propriety and regularity. Value for money is defined as "the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality (or fitness for purpose) to meet the customer's requirement".
10. The emphasis on "whole life costs and quality" means that buyers can take account of a variety of factors, including running and disposal costs and quality aspects of the product or service, and *not* just the initial purchase price. The reference "to meet the customer's requirement" enables departments to specify what they need to meet their own operational and policy objectives, while contributing to the Government's objectives on environmental matters. This might mean higher quality "green" products. Buyers must, however, satisfy themselves that requirements are tested critically for need, cost effectiveness and affordability.
11. Public bodies are also required to comply with the EC Treaty, the EC procurement directives, the UK Regulations that implement them and case law. This legislation is designed to ensure that public procurement is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory. This means for example that the distance travelled to deliver food, or the locality in which it is produced, cannot be a criterion in awarding the contract, as this would be discriminatory.
12. Within these parameters, the rules provide buyers with considerable scope to pursue sustainable development objectives through procurement as explained in:
  - OGC & Defra joint note on environmental issues in procurement – explains the scope for taking such issues into account within the framework of the Government's procurement policy and the EC procurement rules.  
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/eip2003/index.htm>
  - PSFPI Frequently Asked Questions  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/faqs.pdf>
  - "Green Guide for Buyers" that covers issues such as energy efficiency, hazardous substances, waste minimisation and water conservation. URL:  
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextf.htm>.
13. On food and catering, for example, buyers **can set requirements for delivery frequencies, freshness, taste etc.** Such criteria may encourage small and local suppliers to bid for more Government contracts. *See also sections below on "organic and other sustainable methods of farming, quality issues, assurance and local sourcing.*

## Public Health and Safety

14. Public bodies must minimise any safety risks to their recipients by adhering to the legislative requirements on food provision, safety, quality, labelling and composition including the Food Safety Act 1990. A useful summary is found in the Food Standards Agency's "Food Law Guide September 2002". URL: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/foodlaw.pdf>.
15. While food suppliers themselves must comply with the various legislation, public sector organisations supplying food have an obligation to complete effective due diligence to ensure the quality and compliance of their suppliers. Suppliers are expected to have an adequate Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system (HACCP). This affects the supply, preparation, packaging, storage and distribution of food.

## Principles for sustainable farming and food - now and in the future

16. The key principles in the *Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in England* are:
  - produce **safe, healthy products** in response to market demand and ensure that all consumers have access to nutritious food, and to accurate information about food products.
  - support the **viability and diversity of rural and urban** economies and communities.
  - enable viable livelihoods to be made from **sustainable land management**, both through the market and through payments for public benefits.
  - respect and operate within the **biological limits of natural resources** (especially soil, water and biodiversity).
  - achieve consistently high standards of **environmental performance** by **reducing energy consumption**, by minimising resource inputs, and use **renewable energy** wherever possible.
  - ensure a safe and hygienic working environment and high social welfare and training for all employees involved in the food chain.
  - achieve consistently high standards of **animal health and welfare**.
  - sustain the resource available for growing food and supplying other public benefits over time, except where alternative land uses are essential to meet other needs of society.
  - promote these principles wherever our food is produced and processed and work closely with the devolved administrations to do so<sup>1</sup>.

## Quality issues

17. The *Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in England* emphasises that consumers expect their food to be safe and nutritious with many being prepared to

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<sup>1</sup> These principles are published on page 12 of the Government's strategy for *Sustainable Farming and Food in England* (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/newstrategy/index.htm>). This explains that: "although this is a strategy for England, given the global nature of sustainable development, we will want to promote these principles wherever our food is produced and processed and will work closely with the devolved administrations to do so".

pay more for value added products. If we are to be “joined-up” about this we need to place more emphasis in our procurement on aspects of quality – a key component of value for money (see above). This should also have a direct economic benefit to contracting authorities. For example, there is evidence suggesting that the provision of healthier food can result in shorter recovery times in hospitals and more alert pupils in schools – cost benefits that may far outweigh savings that many public sector organisations try to make on their food bills.

18. The influence of public sector bodies on caterers and via them, producers, can also help to drive up standards generally with wider benefits to society at large. For example, according to a House of Commons health select committee report published on 26 May 2004, the economic cost of obesity in England alone could be £7.4bn a year and rising with substantial costs falling on the NHS. Buyers cannot consider these external costs when awarding contracts, but those responsible for requisitioning contracts should be alert to them when allocating budgets for catering and food (and when producing business cases) so that quality is not lost as a result of cost constraints. Any price premium paid for higher standards should however be reasonable and lead ultimately to the deliverance of value for money.
19. Public sector bodies have a particular duty of care for vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, older people and those recovering in hospital and should actively encourage improvements in their diet. By improving physical and economic access to healthy food the public sector can play an important role in tackling social disadvantage and reducing food poverty.
20. Greater consumption of fruit and vegetables is recommended by the Government – see “5 A Day” in the glossary at Part 4. This can affect either menu selection or processed food content. Other areas to address are salt, fat and sugar reduction, and reduction in use of colour or specific additives. [The FSA web site holds recommendations.](#)

## Assurance Schemes

21. ASSURANCE SCHEMES are voluntary schemes. They verify through regular independent inspection that farmers and growers are producing primary agricultural products according to documented foundation standards covering food safety and traceability, animal welfare and environmental protection, which are based on legislation, codes of good agricultural practice and recognised good industry practice. Defra’s policy is to encourage increased coverage of Assurance Schemes (see Glossary).
22. Retailers often require that goods be produced in accordance with standards laid down in ASSURANCE SCHEMES so that they can demonstrate due diligence. Public sector buyers can also use assurance criteria to help determine requirements for food safety, production and process methods, animal welfare and environmental protection etc in their technical specifications. They can also accept assured sources as proof of compliance with those criteria.
23. However, buyers must under the public procurement rules also accept other means of proof and, therefore, when specifying products covered under assurance schemes provide suppliers with the opportunity of providing other evidence such as technical dossiers, auditors’ reports and test reports. This is to ensure that the specification and the means to assess the conformity with the specification do not result in the reservation of the contract to national / local companies.

## Organic and other methods of sustainable farming

24. The EC's Interpretative Communication on environmental issues in public procurement (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/gpp/>) confirms that methods of processing and production can be requested in the technical specifications of the tender where these help to specify the performance characteristics of the product or service. This includes both process and production methods that "*physically*" affect the end product (e.g. absence of chemicals) and those that do not, but nevertheless affect the "*nature*" of the end product such as "organically grown foodstuffs". See *also section above on Assurance Schemes*.

## Local Sourcing

25. There is evidence that local sourcing can "contribute" to the regeneration of rural economies – the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment being a key objective of sustainable development<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, local sourcing may also bring additional benefits to contracting authorities, in that local suppliers and producers may have a competitive edge over suppliers from further a field. This may be as a result of lower overheads, such as reduced transport costs, and thus given the opportunity to tender, local suppliers may offer the most advantageous bid.

26. However, public bodies must ensure value for money is obtained and that the principle of non-discrimination is adhered to. This means that although it is valid for public sector buyers to remove obstacles to tendering by local and smaller suppliers – no preference can be shown in terms of explicit criteria based on location or nationality<sup>3</sup>.

## Partnering

27. Buyers will obtain the best results by working in partnership with their suppliers outside the contractual process, on a voluntary basis, to inform and encourage them to work towards greater sustainability. Advice on supply chain management is given in Part 3 of the Green Guide for Buyers. URL: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/greenbuy/index.htm>.

## Conclusion

28. Taking account of sustainable development in the procurement of food and catering services means:

- providing nutritious meals,
- using quality ingredients,
- developing good reliable suppliers
- minimising process costs

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<sup>2</sup> Case studies published on Defra's web site show that initiatives on local food sourcing do not necessarily cost more, e.g. the price paid for it is less or competitive with sources from further a field. URL: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/links.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of best practice on local food sourcing exist on the Government estate and in the wider public sector. For example, the National Health Service is exploring ways to maximise opportunities for UK and local growers to supply the *National School Fruit Scheme* and the Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust has put together a business case for developing a *Central Production Unit* on a brownfield site in Cornwall for supplying prepared meals in the County from local sources.

- looking after the environment and natural resources and avoiding waste
- contributing to the sustainable development agenda
- demonstrating value for money
- achieving continuous improvement in public services

29. The majority of the recipients of food within the public sector are among the vulnerable groups in society, covering our schools, hospitals and social services. That is why the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative is so important.

## PART 3: ACTION SHEET

### Integrating sustainable development considerations

*Note. Please read this section in conjunction with the “Catering Services and Food Procurement Toolkit” at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/tools.htm>. Annex 1 of Appendix 2 of the Toolkit contains model specification clauses to help buyers and specifiers meet PSFPI objectives.*

Work in partnership with catering contractors and other suppliers to integrate the following sustainable development considerations into your food and catering procurement. More information is given in the glossary in Part 4 below.

#### (a) Raising production and process standards

##### Assurance Schemes

- Where appropriate, specify:
  - food standards that mirror standards laid down in assurance schemes<sup>4</sup> that:
    - encompass food safety, environmental and animal welfare issues
    - provide for regular independent third party inspection
    - are accredited to EN 45011; and
  - that the RED TRACTOR logo is acceptable evidence of compliance with specified standards, as are higher level schemes such as Freedom Foods and LEAF marque<sup>5</sup> (see also organic food below); or
  - that alternative evidence is acceptable provided it is credible.

##### Organic food

- where appropriate, increase the provision of organic meals and snacks - meeting the criteria of EC REGULATION 2092/91 in accordance with the Government’s “Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England”, by (a) requiring them as an option in staff canteens, and (b) actively encouraging their availability in general catering programmes.

#### (b) Increase opportunities for small and local producers to tender

- Consider longer term contracts<sup>6</sup> to develop new suppliers who need to invest in meeting PSFPI objectives, e.g. more sustainable methods of production or processing.

<sup>4</sup> Reference to assurance schemes helps to ensure that minimum quality standards are not undercut

<sup>5</sup> More advice on assurance schemes is given under section 5 of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) held on the PSFPI web site at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/faqs.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> If the supply base is not sufficiently developed to provide real competition, or the requirement itself is likely to change over time it may be better to split the requirement into lots or delay the movement to longer-term

- Standardise the data required from potential suppliers and tailor the information requested for different goods or services, depending on value and risk<sup>7</sup>. Ensure the information necessary for them to understand the requirements of the contract are placed up front and not buried in the tender documents. Simplify the contract documents and add a degree of standardisation<sup>8</sup>, where feasible.
- Remove unnecessary restrictions that prevent local businesses from competing to supply food - while avoiding giving them preferential treatment that would be in contravention of the procurement rules – by, for example:
  - Making sure that potential suppliers know how to identify and compete for public sector contracts by widely publicising the sort of information available on the Office for Government Commerce’s “Supplying Government” web site<sup>9</sup> and liaising with the Small Business Services Unit who may be able to offer training<sup>10</sup>;
  - Specifying fresh produce and seasonal produce that can be grown in the UK and less exotic fruit and vegetables that local growers are unable to produce, where such requirements meet users' needs<sup>11</sup>;
  - *where purchasing is decentralised (e.g. health trusts and education authorities and schools)* structuring contracts in relatively small sizes where consistent with value for money, reducing barriers to local agriculture and horticulture to show how they can better meet requirements. For example, by:
    - working, on a voluntary basis, with large contract holders to facilitate the inclusion of smaller growers and producers as second and third tier suppliers,
    - promoting the use of lots<sup>12</sup> during the tendering process, where this is consistent with value for money, to allow small and medium enterprises to bid for certain

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contracts. Equally some food commodity types experience considerable fluctuations in pricing, and in some cases spot rate purchasing or short term contract are more suitable.

<sup>7</sup> Research has shown that the amount of information requested by the public sector in pre-qualification and tendering far exceeds that of the private sector, and is often disproportionate to the tender value or business risk.

<sup>8</sup> The Meat and Livestock Commission’s web sites at <http://www.mlcfoodservice.com> and <http://www.mlc.org.uk> for example contain pictorial meat specifications - available as PDF downloads – that buyers can refer to in their contracts to introduce a degree of standardisation for their suppliers. See also Annex 1 to Appendix 2 to the “Catering Services and Food Procurement Toolkit”.  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/tools.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> This approach is especially useful for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) and local producers who may be discouraged from tendering because of perceived barriers. OGC has produced a guide “SMALLER SUPPLIER ... BETTER VALUE” to raise awareness of the better value SMEs can bring to the marketplace – see Part 3.

<sup>10</sup> Approaches to the Small Business Services Unit should be made through the local Business Link Operator via <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/directory?r.s=e>.

<sup>11</sup> Referring in standard specifications to varieties of fruit and vegetable that are grown within the UK allows UK agriculture and horticulture to compete for most contracts (on the basis the Welsh authorities are already beginning to adopt following the Cardiff University report).

<sup>12</sup> Splitting contracts into “lots” allows small and large suppliers to compete on equal terms. Tendering the lots at the same time avoids the danger of disaggregating demand, which is against EC rules. Lots can be split in any way, e.g. by product or distribution area. Suppliers can bid for some or all lots. Within product groups, this can be further sub-divided (e.g. prepared and non-prepared vegetables), or services can be separated (e.g. tendering separately for food and distribution). Servicing smaller lots enables smaller suppliers to develop competencies, and reduces risk of over-reliance. Similarly if a lack of competition has developed, appointing new suppliers to small lots allows confidence to be built while reducing service risk, and developing a better long-term competitive base. An assessment should be made of the cost / benefit of an approach that results in handling a larger supplier base. Additional strategies to reduce process costs (e.g. Purchasing Card or E-invoicing) may

parts of supply contracts (see the NHS' PATCHWORK APPROACH<sup>13</sup> as an example of this strategy) and

- tendering more frequently for smaller quantities and establishing more flexible specifications (e.g. for more limited ranges of produce per contract) where this takes account of EC aggregation rules<sup>14</sup> and is consistent with value for money and public expenditure requirements.
- Ensure that tenders conducted through E-Business tools only require simple Internet capability on the part of suppliers. Help may be available from "UK online for business" - a DTI led partnership between industry and government that provides small businesses with impartial advice about e-business and information & communications technologies (ICT).<sup>15</sup>

### **(c) Increase consumption of healthy food and promote food hygiene**

- Promote healthy diets, e.g. by specifying that catering contractors provide healthy eating in catering units and possibly by subsidising foods that are low in salt, fat or sugar<sup>16</sup>.
- Take advantage of initiatives already operating within Government. For example:
  - "5 A DAY" programme for fruit and vegetables to promote health (<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay/fs/en>)
  - Healthier school lunches (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/default.shtml>)<sup>17</sup>
  - Wired for Health<sup>18</sup> (<http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/>),
  - Healthy Living Blueprint for Schools<sup>19</sup>
  - Food and Health Action Plan (FAHAP)<sup>20</sup>
  - Better Hospital Food Programme<sup>21</sup> ([http://patientexperience.nhsestates.gov.uk/bhf/bhf\\_content/home/home.asp](http://patientexperience.nhsestates.gov.uk/bhf/bhf_content/home/home.asp))

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allow greater flexibility with the use of lots, provided small suppliers become E-capable. Food contracts already carry a high administrative cost due to market price fluctuations.

<sup>13</sup> Allowing for lots and then communicating this fact effectively among local and regional businesses can be a potentially effective method for furthering local food and ensuring security of supply.

<sup>14</sup> EC Directives prohibit public bodies from maintaining contracts below EC procurement thresholds for the purpose of deliberately avoiding the rules.

<sup>15</sup> UK online can show suppliers how new technological developments can help them improve the effectiveness of businesses. Call the Infoline on 0845 715 2000. E-mail [info@ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk](mailto:info@ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk). Web site: <http://www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk>

<sup>16</sup> Evidence suggests that changes in food habits can lead to significant improvements in health – see FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY in the Glossary.

<sup>17</sup> This DfES site contains guidance for caterers to the new compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches, which came into effect on 1 April 2001.

<sup>18</sup> "Wired for Health" is managed by the Health Development Agency on behalf of the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills. It comprises a series of websites providing health information for a range of audiences relevant to the National Curriculum and the National Healthy School Standard.

<sup>19</sup> The Blueprint is designed to help schools improve the health of their pupils including improvements in diet and school meals. URL: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/>

<sup>20</sup> Food and Health Action Plan – see: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/57/09/04105709.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> The Better Hospital Food programme aims to make patients stay in hospital a more enjoyable experience by radically improving the range and quality of food they are fed.

- In care homes - adhere to the NATIONAL CARE STANDARDS for food provision.
- Promote food hygiene to contribute to Food Standards Agency's aim of reducing the incidence of food-borne disease by 20% over the period 2001 to 2006<sup>22</sup>.

#### **(d) Reduce adverse environmental impacts<sup>23</sup>**

##### *Production and supply*

- Where appropriate, specify food standards such as those laid down in assurance schemes that encompass environmental issues - see Section 2a above.
- Consider using variants<sup>24</sup> to specify higher food standards that, for example, mirror those in higher-level schemes such as Freedom Foods and LEAF – see paragraphs 21 to 23 in Section 2 above.

##### *Delivery*

- Review distribution requirements and costs prior to starting the tender process. This may raise the possibility of changing the location and method of preparing meals, allowing for use of own transport or removing the need for some transport requirements.
- Alternatively, consider tendering for delivery (i.e. for collection and distribution) separately from supply in remote access areas where costs are disproportionately high for small food producers and can deter them from bidding. If savings are possible in reducing distribution costs this could allow specification of higher standards to raise food quality.
- Seek to reduce the frequency of individual journeys<sup>25</sup> needed to make deliveries to the Department's premises and require suppliers, when working on the contract, to switch off the engines of their vehicles when stationary on the Department's premises for longer than two minutes so as to keep fuel usage and emissions to the minimum.

##### *Catering operations*

- Design catering facilities – both new build and refurbishment – to conserve energy and water and reduce pollution and waste.<sup>26</sup>
- Minimise the waste associated with food, both in terms of meals not consumed and waste more generally, for example, by:

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<sup>22</sup> Each year there is up to 4.5 million cases of food poisoning. Over the next 5 years the Food Standards Agency wants to see the incidence of food-borne illness cut by a fifth. More information is given on their web site (<http://www.food.gov.uk>).

<sup>23</sup> Further guidance on improving environmental performance including Government targets is given on the Sustainable Development in Government web site at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/index.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> The use of variants enables buyers to assess the cost/benefit of moving to more sustainable specifications, allowing a greater comparison of options. They can also provide a solution where specifications are felt to contain unnecessary barriers to supply (as for example specific packaging requirements). This may be the case where the specification provides a minimum standard, but organisations wish to accept and give value to a higher quality product. Minimum standards for variants must be clarified in the contract documentation.

<sup>25</sup> Consult suppliers before attempting to reduce the frequency of deliveries as this may discriminate against smaller and local producers, especially those providing fresh produce. However, by encouraging greater co-operation among local businesses, it may be possible to reduce deliveries and, as a consequence, their overheads.

<sup>26</sup> Building Research Establishment's *Budgeting for Sustainability* web site provides public sector clients with access to advice and guidance on assessing the economic, social and environmental benefits of an early investment in design quality. The site's searchable database details methods of, and guidance on accounting for whole life value when setting budgets for construction projects. [www.bre.co.uk/sustainableprocurement](http://www.bre.co.uk/sustainableprocurement)

- ❑ avoiding the use of disposable cutlery and plates
- ❑ serving milk, condiments and sauces in re-usable containers rather than disposable individual containers/sachets where this does not compromise food safety
- ❑ using serviettes made from unbleached recycled material
- ❑ recycling glass, cans, paper, plastics and vegetable oil
- ❑ minimising packaging
- ❑ specifying energy-efficient appliances rated B or better under the EC's energy labelling scheme, which are HCFC and HFC free if they use refrigerants.
- Take account of initiatives to reduce waste already operating within your organisation, e.g. Managing Food Waste in the NHS<sup>27</sup> and the NHS Waste Prevention Guide at: [http://www.nhsestates.gov.uk/sustainable\\_development/index.asp?submenu\\_ID=waste](http://www.nhsestates.gov.uk/sustainable_development/index.asp?submenu_ID=waste)
- Composting organic catering waste is a vital tool in helping the UK meet stringent targets for reducing landfill of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) under the Landfill Directive, and Waste Strategy 2000 targets for recycling and composting<sup>28</sup>.
- Comply with other environmental aspects of the Government's policy which, in addition to minimising waste and reducing deliveries, are designed to conserve energy, water and other resources, promote biodiversity, phase out the use of ozone depleting substances and minimise the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other substances damaging to health and the environment.
- Support product best practice standards that are being developed in the retail industry and elsewhere, e.g. for sustainable PALM OIL PRODUCTION that forms a major ingredient in a wide variety of food and detergent products.

### **(e) Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand**

- Within the legal and policy framework of public procurement consider entering the supply chain at different stages and of dealing with all types of suppliers<sup>29</sup>, for example
  - directly from producers and consortiums of small suppliers,
  - distributors, food processors up to out-sourced catering outlets provided by food service companies<sup>30</sup>,
  - alternative organisations to traditional suppliers such as social enterprises, including charities, not- for- profit organisations, voluntary or non-professional groups. Examples may include community farmers markets or allotment co-operatives.
- Encourage small local producers/suppliers to collaborate on organising collective responses to demand<sup>31</sup>, e.g. by developing local supply network possibly in conjunction with Government Offices or ENGLISH FARMING AND FOOD PARTNERSHIPS.

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<sup>27</sup> Contact: Betterhospitalfood@doh.gsi.gov.uk.

<sup>28</sup> More information on PACKAGING, ENERGY EFFICIENT PRODUCTS, HCFCs, HFCs and COMPOSTING is given in the Glossary.

<sup>29</sup> Review specifications to ensure particular supplier types are not excluded or discriminated against. Taking control of the supply chain at an earlier stage can facilitate the improvement of local supply chains.

<sup>30</sup> Where the choice is to use a prime contractor, procurement strategy can still encompass development for smaller suppliers by ensuring the contract details are widely published and smaller suppliers encouraged to approach the prime contractor directly, and vice versa. But note that larger contractors should not be forced to alter their supply chain to allow for smaller suppliers. Any work in this area must be on a purely voluntary basis.

<sup>31</sup> Many small producers have the capacity to supply competitively but miss out on large government supply contracts because they are not generally organised to work collectively;

- Work in partnership with suppliers to inform and encourage them to move towards greater sustainability and competitiveness – see paragraph 27 in Part 2 above.
- Where appropriate, identify schemes and grants that can help farmers and growers meet public sector requirements for quantity, quality, consistency and security of supply<sup>32</sup>.

#### **(f) Ethnic, cultural and religious diets**

- Ensure that demand from ethnic minority customers, whether for cultural or religious reasons, is reflected in the planning and promotion of menus and selection of dishes<sup>33</sup>.

#### **(g) Fair treatment of suppliers, including promoting fair trade**

- Encourage catering contractors (post contract award) to treat their suppliers in a fair and ethical manner (e.g. in relation to bill payments etc)<sup>34</sup>
- *Where appropriate (e.g. in Government staff restaurants and more generally):* provide FAIR TRADE and food produced under ethical assurance schemes as options - reflecting such needs in non-discriminatory specifications, in line with user requirements and working on a voluntary basis with suppliers once contracts have been awarded<sup>35</sup>.

#### **(h) Working conditions for catering staff**

- Provide healthy working conditions, safe-working methods, well-maintained plant and equipment and responsible supervision so that personal injury, work-related illness, property damage, and unplanned interruptions are prevented or minimised<sup>36</sup>.
- Provide appropriate information and training so that all employees are aware of their duty to provide and promote a safe, hygienic, healthy and nutritious catering service by observing the law, rules and regulations and adhering to requirements specified within the contract of the contracting authority and related policies.

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<sup>32</sup> Schemes include: England Rural Development Programme (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/default.htm>); Agricultural Development Scheme (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/adscheme/consultdoc.htm>); Leader + grant scheme (<http://www.ukleader.org.uk/>); and demonstration farms (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/lsc/demofarms/default.htm>). Some Government Offices, e.g. Yorkshire & Humberside have developed web site giving details of support schemes within their areas. More information is given on Defra's PSFPI web site under the headings "FAQs" and "Regions". URL: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/index.htm>

<sup>33</sup> The Department for Education and Skills' web site provides information on diets for religious and ethnic groups. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/annexa.htm>

<sup>34</sup> For more information – see CODE OF PRACTICE ON SUPERMARKETS', WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS - A CODE OF GOOD CUSTOMER PRACTICE, "SMALLER SUPPLIER... BETTER VALUE and CODE OF PRACTICE ON SUPERMARKETS in the Glossary.

<sup>35</sup> See OGC's advise note at [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001597](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001597).

<sup>36</sup> In short we'd expect the catering contractor to treat its staff in a way that would not bring embarrassment to the contracting authority.

## PART 4: GLOSSARY

### **ABM (Assured British Meat) and FABBL (Farm Assured British Beef and Lamb)**

ABM is the standard regulatory body for beef and lamb. FABBL covers some 18,000 producers in England and is licensed by ABM to implement their standards through the life cycle. Covers food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection.

### **ABP – Assured British Pigs and BMQSM (British Quality Standard Marks)**

ABP set standards from production to processing and cover about 90% of British meat production. BMSQM extends assurance into processed products such as pork, bacon, ham and sausages. Covers animal welfare and food safety. Requires pigs to be on assured farms from birth and antibiotic residue monitoring to be undertaken.

### **ACCS (Assured Combinable Crops Scheme).**

Covers all combinable crops, i.e. cereals grown for human and animal consumption. Environmental standards are above legal minimum and producers are required to restrict chemical application. Covers 75% to 80% of combinable crops – applies only to England and Wales.

### **Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England**

Paragraph 4.4 of the “Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England” envisages that the Government in taking forward action to encourage sustainable procurement of food, will examine the role that procurement of organic food can play. A copy is on Defra’s web site: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/actionplan/index.htm>.

*See also in the glossary: EC Regulation 2092/91 and UK Register of Organic Food Standards.*

### **APS – Assured Produce Scheme (horticulture)**

Scheme covers all types of fresh produce and potatoes grown in the UK. Standards are based on integrated crop management (ICM) and work closely with LEAF on minimising pesticide and fertiliser use. Covers 77% by area of UK production.

### **Assurance Schemes (see also Organic Food)**

Assurance Schemes are schemes which verify through regular independent inspection that farmers and growers are producing primary agricultural products according to documented foundation standards covering food safety and traceability, animal welfare and environmental protection which are based on legislation, codes of good agricultural practice and recognised good industry practice.

Retailers often require suppliers to belong to such schemes, which have a high level of coverage in many sectors in this country. Defra’s policy is to encourage increased coverage.

*The following is an illustrative list of Assurance Schemes operating in the UK on 31 January 2003. Those indicated by an asterisk are eligible to use the RED TRACTOR logo.*

- APS – Assured Produce Scheme (Horticulture)\*
- ACCS – Assured Combinable Crops Scheme \*
- NDFAS – National Dairy Farmers Assurance Scheme (milk)\*
- ACP – Assured Chicken Production\*
- ABP – Assured British Pigs\*
- ABM – Assured British Meat\*

- FABBL – Farm Assured British Beef or Lamb\*
- FAWL – Farm Assured Welsh Livestock\*
- NIBL FQAS – Northern Irish Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme\*
- Scottish Specially Selected Assurance Schemes – Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Scottish Quality Cereals (SQC)\*
- Genesis Quality Assurance Scheme (beef and lamb and combinable crops)\*.
- Lion Quality Scheme (Eggs)
- EUREPGAP – fresh fruits and vegetables

There are also a number of higher-level assurance schemes. For example:

- RSPCA Freedom Foods
- LEAF- Linking Environment and Farming

*More information about these schemes is given elsewhere in the glossary.*

### **Assured Chicken Production Scheme**

Covers 90-95% of UK broiler chicken production. Rules mainly relate to food safety. Feed must be UFAS assured. Welfare standards are above minimum legal requirements.

### **Barn Eggs**

To qualify eggs must come from poultry enterprises in which hens are stocked at a density of no more than 9 birds per square metre of usable area. The building must have sufficient perching to allow a minimum of 15cm of perching for every bird.

### **BMQSM (British Quality Standard Marks)**

See “ABP – Assured British Pigs” above.

### **British Farm Standard**

The British Farm Standard is denoted by the RED TRACTOR logo, which is a voluntary scheme that was developed by the National Farmers' Union and now administered by Assured Food Standards. It indicates compliance with specific standards laid down in qualifying Assurance Schemes. See ASSURANCE SCHEMES for a list of schemes that qualified on 31 January 2003 to use the Red Tractor logo. URL: <http://www.littleredtractor.org.uk/contact.asp>

### **Code of practice on supermarkets**

The “Code of Practice on Supermarkets’ Dealing with Suppliers was drawn up by the Office of Fair Trading. It governs the trading relationship between the supermarkets and their suppliers. The largest supermarkets have all given legally binding undertakings to comply with the code but the government is keen to see its principles and practices adopted by others in the food chain. Look for “Supermarket Code of Conduct” under “A-Z Index on DTI’s site for Consumer & Competition Policy web site (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/>)

### **Composting**

Regulation (EC) 1774/2002 permits composting and biogas (anaerobic digestion) as disposal routes for low-risk animal by-products and catering waste. The Regulation sets out the necessary treatment standard for animal by-products to ensure that the end product can be safely applied to land. The Regulation also permits Member States to introduce their own treatment standards for plants that are treating only catering waste. To this end, Defra commissioned an independent risk assessment that

recommended alternative treatment standards to which organic waste could be safely composted or digested anaerobically that were at least as effective as the EU standard. These UK national standards were introduced by the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003. The overall objective is to develop a set of rules that allows the composting or anaerobic digestion of organic waste to take place economically while fully protecting animal and public health. URL:  
[http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/publicat/compost\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/publicat/compost_guidance.pdf).

## Deliveries

The EC Treaty, EC directives and UK Regulations that implement them are designed to ensure that public procurement is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory. This means for example that the distance travelled to deliver food, or the locality in which it is produced, cannot be a specific factor in awarding the contract, as this would be discriminatory.

It is however permitted for public sector contracting authorities to set reasonable requirements for delivery frequencies, freshness, taste etc. Such criteria may appear to give local suppliers a competitive advantage but provided a foreign supplier is not denied an opportunity to compete on equal terms by, for example, setting up an operation in Britain - then such criteria are legitimate. However it is unlikely to be permissible to require the supplier to employ local labour because that would be a discriminatory condition to set.

## EC interpretative document on social issues in public procurement

The EC interpretative document on social issues in public procurement provides advice on the scope for taking account of social issues in public procurement. A copy is available on the EC web site. URL:  
[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001\\_0566en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0566en01.pdf) .  
See also GREEN GUIDE FOR BUYERS.

## EC Regulation 2092/91

Organic farming is controlled by EC Regulation 2092/1991 . It sets out the inputs and practices that may be used in organic farming and growing, and the inspection system that must be put in place to ensure this. This Regulation also applies to processing, processing aids and ingredients in organic foods. All food sold as organic therefore must originate from growers, processors and importers who are registered with an approved body and subject to regular inspection. The aim is to create an audit trail so that consumers can be assured that food sold as organic is produced to a standard, to protect genuine producers from fraudulent competition, and to facilitate trade within the Community.

Buyers are free to specify that organic food must meet the criteria of the EC Regulation 2092/91 and to accept certification that meets these criteria such as that of the Soil Association, Scottish Organic Producers Association, Organic Farmers and Growers and others. But they cannot specify any one in particular. This would be deemed discriminatory under the public procurement rules, as limiting the requirement to a specific non-mandatory label would prevent suppliers from offering an equivalent means to meet the underlying requirement.

EC Regulation 2092/91 requires that anyone carrying out any form of processing on organic food for sale needs to be registered. Processing could be held to include the preparation of food by caterers. Currently, however there is uncertainty whether the requirement applied and the European Commission have been asked for their opinion. *See also in the glossary: UK Register of Organic Food Standards [UKROFS no longer exists, probably best to delete that entry from the glossary] and Action Plan to Develop Organic Farming in England.*

**EN 45011 accreditation standard**

EN 45011 is the internationally recognised standard for product certification. It imposes requirements on the certification body to be transparent, impartial, competent and rigorous in assessing products. It also requires a regular inspection regime, requiring a minimum of one visit to each site per annum. The certification body must demonstrate to the national accreditation authority that they work to these requirements before they can issue “accredited” certificates. The national regulatory authority then regularly inspects and audits these certification bodies to ensure the validity of their results. In the UK, the regulatory authority is UKAS, (the UK Accreditation Service). Equivalent bodies in Europe include: Denmark (DANAK), Sweden (SWEDAC) Finland (FINAS), France (COFRAC), Germany (DAR), Ireland (NAB), Italy (SINCERT, Holland (RvA), Norway (NA), Spain (ENAC), Switzerland (SAS).

**Energy-efficient appliances**

More advice is given in Part 3 of the Green Guide for Buyers and elsewhere on the “Sustainable Development in Government” web site. [See under “Part F Procurement” on that site - <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextf.htm>]

**English Farming and Food Partnerships**

The organisation’s role is to strengthen the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of England’s farming and food industries through greater collaboration both horizontally with fellow farmers and vertically with suppliers and customers in the food chain. URL: <http://www.effp.com>

**Ethical performance**

Ethical performance is about internal business processes, i.e. how a body deals with its suppliers or customers. Sometimes it’s possible to address issues of this nature through procurement. GREEN GUIDE FOR BUYERS – Part 2 gives advice on SOCIAL and ethical issues. (<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/greenbuy/index.htm>)

**Ethical Trading Initiative**

The ETI is an alliance of companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and trade union organisations working together to identify and promote ethical trade - good practice in the implementation of a code of conduct for good labour standards. For more information on the Ethical Trading Initiative – see their web site at <http://www.ethicaltrade.org>.

**EUREPGAP**

EUREPGAP is designed to help producers improve food quality and safety, biodiversity, more efficient use of natural resources, minimum use of pesticides and fertilisers and worker health and safety. See the EUREP GAP web site is at: [http://www.eurep.org/sites/index\\_e.html](http://www.eurep.org/sites/index_e.html). Also: [http://www.eurep.org/sites/fresh\\_doc.html](http://www.eurep.org/sites/fresh_doc.html)

**European Initiative for Sustainable Development in Agriculture’s “Common Codex for Integrated Farm Management”**

The Common Codex for Integrated Farm Management is a whole farm policy that uses integrated ecological pest controls, other beneficial natural processes and advanced technology for efficient food production that is profitable and environmentally responsible. Find out more about the “Codex for Integrated Farm Management” from LEAF – see in glossary.

**FABBL (Farm Assured British Beef and Lamb)**

See ABM above

## Fair Trade

Developing countries are estimated to lose £500 billion per year due to an unfair trading system. Buying fair trade or ethically produced goods can mean a better deal for farmers, growers and small-scale producers by encouraging partnership schemes that reduce the number of middlemen. This ensures that they receive a fair price, thereby enabling greater investment in their businesses or in health and education projects within their communities. This improves productivity and safeguards future supplies.

Under a year-long pilot scheme - launched in January 2003 and run jointly by the Soil Association and the Fairtrade Foundation - retailers can apply to use the Fairtrade stamp if they pay farmers enough to cover the "sustainable cost of production", which includes a margin for profit and investment. British products expected to receive the Fairtrade mark include potatoes, beef, bacon, lamb and pork.

See also ETHICAL TRADING INITIATIVE, FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION, EC INTERPRETATIVE DOCUMENT on social issues in public procurement and GREEN GUIDE FOR BUYERS in the Glossary.

## Fairtrade Foundation

The Fairtrade Foundation exists to ensure a better deal for disadvantaged third world producers by awarding the Fair-trade Mark to products such as tea, coffee and chocolate which have been bought from internationally recognised Fair Trade sources.

It was set up by Cafod, Christian Aid, New Consumer, Oxfam, Traidcraft and the World Development Council and was later joined by the Women's Institute. Specifications for catering services and supplies cannot be framed in terms of fair or ethically traded requirements - as such "social labels" do not define the end product in terms of characteristics or performance as required by EC rules. More information is given on their web site at <http://www.Fairtrade.org.uk>. See also Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International. URL: <http://www.fairtrade.net/>

## FAWL (Farm Assured Welsh Livestock)

Scheme covers about 60% of Welsh lamb output and 70% of Welsh beef output, but applies only to on-farm. Its standards generally aim to implement legal requirements and surpass them in a few specific areas. Animals must be on assured farms for 60-90 days to qualify.

## Five A Day (5 A Day)

The Department of Health's "5 A DAY" programme is designed to increase the consumption of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables that are essential to a healthier life style. Rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre they help to reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers. More information about the programme as well as details of what counts towards the 5 A Day target and portion sizes are given on the Department of Health's web site at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/healthtopics>. To apply for a licence to use the 5 A Day logo to highlight healthier options on your menu and in promotional material, e-mail: [fiveaday@cmi-plc.com](mailto:fiveaday@cmi-plc.com) or call their helpline on 0709 200 3292.

## Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency is an independent food safety watchdog set up by an Act of Parliament in 2000 to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food. The Agency's key aims between 2001 and 2006 are to: reduce food borne illness by 20% by improving food safety right through the food chain; help people to eat more healthily; promote honest and informative labelling to help consumers; promote best practice within the food industry; improve the enforcement of food law; and earn people's trust by what they do and how they do it. Its web site contains useful advice. URL: <http://www.food.gov.uk>

### Free Range Eggs

To qualify the hens must have continuous daytime access to open air runs which must be covered with vegetation and have 4m<sup>2</sup> of space each, i.e. a max of 2500 per hectare (about 400 per acre).

### Genesis Quality Assurance Scheme

Scheme covers beef, lamb and combinable crops. Allows farms across several sectors to be assured in a single inspection. It has some 6,500 beef, lamb and crop members and basically follows legal requirements with higher standards for herd health plans, welfare standards and environmental waste.

### Green Guide for Buyers

The guide is designed to help public sector buyers make more efficient choices, and thereby reduce the impact of their buying decisions on the environment and improve their environmental performance. It is available on the Government's Sustainable Development web site.

(<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/greenbuy/index.htm>)

### HCFCs

HCFCs are ozone-depleting substances used mainly as refrigerants. It is Government policy to ensure that no products containing ozone-depleting substances are purchased for use of its estate. More advice is given in Part 3 of the Green Guide for Buyers and elsewhere on the "Sustainable Development in Government" web site. See under "Part F Procurement" on that site - <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextf.htm>

### HFCs (i.e. hydrofluorocarbons)

HFCs are coolants used in some refrigerators, freezers and air conditioning systems. They have a high global warming potential and for this reason it is Government policy that they should only be purchased for use on its estate where it is not safe, cost-effective and technically feasible to use environmentally acceptable alternatives. More advice is given in Part 3 of the Green Guide for Buyers and elsewhere on the "Sustainable Development in Government" web site. URL: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextf.htm>]

*Note. The world's first HFC-free restaurant was opened in Denmark in January 2003. It uses 100% HFC-free, state-of-the-art technology in all its refrigeration and ventilation equipment, including refrigerators, refrigerating rooms, freezing rooms, air conditioning equipment, and soda, juice and ice-cream machines.*

### LEAF marque

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is designed to help farmers improve their environment and business performance and create a better public understanding of farming through a nationwide network of demonstration farms. Its standard is based on Integrated Farm Management (IFM), which is a whole farm policy integrating beneficial natural processes into modern farming practices using advanced technology. URL: <http://www.leafuk.org>.

### Lion Quality Scheme (eggs)

Scheme is UK wide and was developed to reduce salmonella in eggs. All major retailers specify Lion Eggs. Currently covers 95% free range, organic and barn eggs and 75% of cage eggs.

<b>LMC</b>	Scheme only applies on farm and represents about 75% of beef output and 40% of lamb output in Northern Ireland. Standards are only above legal requirements in a few specific areas. There are controls on feed sources, medicines and animal health, including compulsory removal of horns. Residency periods are 90 days for cattle and 45 days for sheep.
<b>Local food sourcing - definition</b>	Defra defines “local food sourcing” as food both produced and sold within a limited geographical radius but which does not necessarily have any distinctive quality.’ This is to differentiate it from “Regional food”, which is defined as ‘food produced within a particular geographical area (whether administrative region, county, town or other appellation) and is marketed as coming from that area. However, it may be sold within or outside that area. Regional food is perceived to have a distinctive quality because of the area in or the method by which it is produced.’ The Food Safety Agency is currently considering the need for a definition for local food and therefore the term may cease to apply.
<b>Local Sourcing</b>	There is no firm evidence at present that local sourcing has lower environmental impacts than efficient national distribution networks. However, there is evidence that it can “contribute” to the regeneration of rural economies – the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment being a key objective of sustainable development. And, as EU and OGC advice makes clear, public sector bodies are able to pursue sustainable development objectives through procurement where this achieves value for money and is non-discriminatory. Public sector bodies should therefore consider the potential for local sourcing by ensuring that their contracts do not contain provisions, which stand in the way of local and UK suppliers. For a directory of local producers by postcode – see Big Barn. URL: <a href="http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/">http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/</a>
<b>Local suppliers – action to help them</b>	Holding briefing sessions to explain the way the Government tenders for supplies, how and where they advertise and how suppliers should respond to those requests should enable local producers amongst others to adapt their production to meet the requirements of the contracting authority – be it a public sector body or catering contractor employed on its behalf. Greater collaboration between producers may make it easier for them to supply products in the quantities required by the large purchasers and to ensure continuity of supply. This already happens in the horticulture sector where producer organisations co-ordinate supply in order to meet the requirements of large purchasers.
<b>National Care Standards</b>	These Standards address the issue of nutrition in care homes and day centres. The standards say that care home providers should assess the service user’s nutritional state and that meals should be varied and nutritious, reflect the service user’s preferences and any special dietary needs including ethnic, cultural and faith ones. Meals should be well prepared and cooked, and attractively presented. The Care Commission, in carrying out its regulatory function, will expect providers to demonstrate that they are meeting the standards. The National Care Standards also state that all care provided, which includes nutritional care, reflects current best practice guidance. <a href="http://www.csci.org.uk/">http://www.csci.org.uk/</a> .
<b>NDFAS - National Dairy Farmers Assurance Scheme</b>	Scheme comprises “first purchasers”, milk groups and dairy companies. Covers mainly food safety and animal welfare.

## Nutrition

For list of useful web sites – see NHS' Nutrition Links. URL:  
[http://www.nhsinherets.nhs.uk/hp/health\\_topics/nutrition/nutrition\\_links.htm](http://www.nhsinherets.nhs.uk/hp/health_topics/nutrition/nutrition_links.htm)

## Organic Food

Organic Food is produced using management practices that minimise damage to the environment and wildlife by:

- Protecting long term soil fertility by maintaining organic matter through using manures, composts, legumes for biological nitrogen fixing and crop rotations.
- Controlling weeds and pests through mechanical means, disease-resistant crop varieties, biodiversity, natural predators and limited biological methods in preference to fertilisers and pesticides.
- Using extensive systems of livestock husbandry with regard to animal welfare, natural evolutionary adaptation and behaviour issues by paying attention to diet, health, shelter and breeding.
- Controlling environmental impacts and conservation of natural habitats.

Organic is a legally defined term that may only be used on food where the product has been certified as organic by an approved body. A full list of authorised bodies in the UK, EU and EU recognised third countries is given on Defra's web site: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/default.htm>. Other sites: Defra's Organic Farming Scheme (support for organic farming) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/ofs/default.htm> and The Soil Association (the UK's largest charity promoting organic production) <http://www.soilassociation.org/sa/SAWeb.nsf/>.

*See also in the glossary: EC Regulation 2092/91 and UK Register of Organic Food Standards and Action Plan to Develop Organic Farming in England.*

## Ozone depleting substances

See HCFCs in the Glossary

## Packaging – minimising it

Minimise packaging by specifying that: (1) it is kept to the minimum necessary to protect the goods in transit; (2) maximum use is made of recycled and recyclable materials (i.e. materials for which facilities exist for their collection and recycling) in the manufacture of crates, pallets etc; and (3) "take-back" schemes operate for reusing packaging or, less preferably, recycling any crates, pallets and other larger items of packaging used to fulfil the contract.

## Palm Oil Production

Impacts from the creation and management of palm oil plantations in major production areas like Indonesia can include loss of tropical rain forest and biodiversity, air pollution from large scale burning for forest clearance, and the displacement of traditional communities. See Second Report of the Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment: Action for Greener Products – a toolbox for change". URL:  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/accpe/index.htm>.

Unilever and other leading companies are developing product standards.  
<http://www.unilever.com/enviromentsociety/sustainabilityinitiatives/agriculture/>

<b>Patchwork approach</b>	NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency's national contract for the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good example of a patchwork approach. When the contract was advertised, suppliers were asked to state which Trusts they would like to service. The result: the appointment of fifteen suppliers based around the country who deliver directly to the hospitals, rather than the goods going through the usual distribution system;
<b>QMS (Quality Meat Scotland (QMS))</b>	See SSS (Scottish Specially Selected Assurance Schemes) below
<b>Red Tractor Mark</b>	The Red Tractor logo denotes food produced in accordance with standards laid down in qualifying assurance schemes. URL: <a href="http://www.littleredtractor.org.uk/">http://www.littleredtractor.org.uk/</a>
<b>RSPCA's Freedom Foods</b>	RSPCA set up the scheme with its own standards to promote higher animal welfare in food production. It is independent of the food and livestock industry and covers on-farm production, transport and slaughter with particular emphasis on welfare and with no claims for environmental standards. <a href="http://www.rspca.org.uk/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RSPCA/RSPCARedirect&amp;pg=AdviceCentre2">http://www.rspca.org.uk/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RSPCA/RSPCARedirect&amp;pg=AdviceCentre2</a>
<b>Seasonal Produce</b>	Information on what's in season is given on the "Tools" page of the PSFPI web site: <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/tools.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/tools.htm</a>
<b>Smaller Supplier... Better Value?</b>	The guide seeks to raise awareness of the greater competition and better value small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can bring to the marketplace. Hard copies of 'Smaller Supplier...Better Value?' are available from the OGC Service desk on 0845 000 4 999. Or it can be viewed on-line on OGC's "SUPPLYING GOVERNMENT" web site at: <a href="http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/ogc_library/generic_guidance/sm_all_supplier_better_value_may_2002.pdf">http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/ogc_library/generic_guidance/sm_all_supplier_better_value_may_2002.pdf</a>
<b>Social performance</b>	Social performance is about the impacts of an organisation on society. That is, on people outside the organisation. Sometimes it is possible to influence issues of this nature through procurement. Part 2 of Defra's GREEN GUIDE FOR BUYERS provides advice to buyers on social and ETHICAL ISSUES. <a href="http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/greenbuy/index.htm">http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/greenbuy/index.htm</a>
<b>SQC (Scottish Quality Cereals)</b>	See SSS (Scottish Specially Selected Assurance Schemes) below
<b>SSS (Scottish Specially Selected Assurance Schemes, QMS (Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)) and SQC (Scottish Quality Cereals))</b>	Various SSS schemes cover over 80% of beef and lamb and 95% of pig production in Scotland.
<b>Supplying Government</b>	OGC has a web site that provides advice and information to businesses wishing to sell their products and services to Government in England. It explains to suppliers how to work with government, where to find contracts opportunities and the types of products and services government buys. It also provides direct links to equivalent sites for Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland. URL: <http://www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk/index.asp>.

### **UK Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS)**

Until July 2003 the approved body in the UK for authorising organic certification bodies was the UK Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS), These activities are now under the direct control of Defra's Organic Strategy Branch.

A full list of authorised bodies in the UK, EU and EU recognised third countries along with much other information is given on Defra's web site: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/default.htm>.

Also: Defra's Organic Farming Scheme (support for organic farming) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/ofs/default.htm> .

The Soil Association (the UK's largest charity promoting organic production) <http://www.soilassociation.org/sa/SAWeb.nsf/> .  
*See also in the glossary: EC Regulation 2092/9 and Action Plan to Develop Organic Farming in England.*

### **Working with Suppliers – A Code of Good Customer Practice**

The Office of Government Commerce's "Working with Suppliers - A Code of Good Customer Practice" (<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?docid=424>) sets out four core values describing how central civil government will work with suppliers – *fairness, honesty, efficiency and professionalism*. The OGC with the Small Business Service has also recently published a booklet "Smaller Supplier... Better Value?". *See Smaller SUPPLIER... BETTER VALUE in the glossary.*

### **Waste management.**

For advice – see Part D of the "Sustainable Development in Government" web site. URL: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextd.htm>. Also: NHS' "Healthcare Waste Minimisation: a compendium of good practice". [http://www.nhsestates.gov.uk/sustainable\\_development/index.asp?submenu\\_ID=waste](http://www.nhsestates.gov.uk/sustainable_development/index.asp?submenu_ID=waste)