

Food

Overview

Food plays an important part in the long-term plans of 17 faith groups, with several themes emerging, the most important of which is that decisions made around food are a key element of environmental stewardship. Reducing meat consumption, adopting a largely vegetarian diet and promoting organic agriculture are all regarded as being kinder to the earth and helping to reduce carbon emissions.

A second important theme is that the huge purchasing power around food offers enormous potential for individuals and faith groups to put faith-based values, such as compassion, justice and equity, into practice. Islam and Hinduism are considering faith-based eco labels, for example, while the Jewish plan calls for the definition of food considered fit for Jews to eat to be expanded to include ecological considerations. Others, such as the Church of England, are putting fair trade values at the heart of their food purchasing policies.

Several faith groups (such as the Church of South India, the New Psalmist Baptist Church and EcoSikh) are encouraging people to grow their own food as a way of developing a closer connection to the earth and leading a simpler lifestyle, while for African churches, this is also seen as a key way to overcome food poverty and promote greater food security.

Following are some extracts taken from the faiths' long-term action plans in which they mention food. This is not complete but gives a strong flavour of the breadth of interest in this topic. For the plans in full, please visit www.arcworld.org

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Buddhists Shanghai

Buddhism's teachings about simple living and cherishing your blessings are very similar to the concept of "green consumption" valued by the modern environmental movement. In our daily lives, for example, this involves actively promoting the idea of not using disposable fast-food containers (popular throughout China), reducing use of chemical detergents, sorting and recycling waste, promoting pollution-free diets and food sourcing... calling people to start with small personal actions such as... not wasting food.

Many monasteries in Shanghai run vegetarian restaurants. In addition to a vegetarian diet to meet people's need, such restaurants could also create a "Buddhist retreat center", where special rooms are set up for retreat, and where there are facilities to give lectures or talks on how to cook vegetarian food. Food from wild animals should never be served.

We will highlight one Buddhist festival day as an environment day for the monasteries;

- * to promote the significance of vegetarianism to health and environment and to advocate vegetarianism among Buddhist followers and their families

Christian

Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference

Recommended Commitments:

Education and Young People

- Actively practice green living, gardening and food in all our schools and places of education. We encourage all to develop their "ecological vocation".

Lifestyles

- Adopt a simple life style that recognises the importance of local, fresh and organic foodstuffs, in their homes and in community outreach.

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

...all natural factors that influence agricultural production and productivity such as the weather, soil erosion, soil fertility etc are important variables that contribute to food security...

Prolonged dry season in 2005 led to a marked drop in the agricultural production especially food crop production with a significant drop in grains.

Improved Food crop and livestock practices

- 1.1 Develop and carry out agro extension & trainings on modern food crop & livestock practices in communities
- 1.2 Promote and enhance biological soil fertility methods
- 1.3 Train local farmers on sustainable agricultural systems
- 1.4 Promote agro forestry techniques
- 1.5 Enhance & promote modern livestock production

Economic use of non-timber forest products

- 1.1 Train forest community members on bee farming
- 1.2 Promote cooperatives in communities for the sale of honey
- 1.3 Train farmers on growing Eru (a wild vegetable found in forest region eaten as a delicacy)
- 1.4 Promote and support local communities in the exploitation of local spices such as *Njangsang, cahshunuts, ogwono, kolanuts, country onion* etc

Fish farming

- 1.1 Train communities in fish pond development for fish farming
- 1.2 Build capacities of fish farmers in sustainable fish farming in lakes, rivers and in the ocean
- 1.3 Support fish farmers with tools and other fishing gears
- 1.4 Collaborate with research institutions on developing modern techniques for fishing in different water bodies

CBCEW (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales)

We must encourage children to understand the value of organic gardening and food production...

Food

A good guide is the Soil Association recommended guidelines for ethical food which is to eat 70% fresh and non-processed, 50% locally sources and 30% organic. All tea and coffee served after masses or at social functions should be fair trade and supplied in washable and re-usable cups and plates. Our food should be seen as an obvious example of our commitment to fair trading and environmental sustainability.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages to sacred sites form an important part of Catholic tradition. We would encourage all pilgrims to make their journeys as environmentally sensitive as possible through their choice of transport and food.

The National Justice and Peace Network

The National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales, a liaison body of the CBCEW, has taken on a serious commitment to address environmental issues, particularly since 2005 when its annual conference focused on environmental justice... Its 2010 conference will focus on food security. Diocesan groups have been involved in such initiatives as the 'Ark' campaign on climate change, Progressio's work on food and water security

Summary of Recommended Commitments

Actively encourage green living, gardening and food in all our schools and places of education. We encourage all to do environmental audits and track their progress.

Church of England

Coventry Diocese

Since 2006, Coventry Diocese's Environmental Group has been undertaking one project each year – from carbon reduction, through education and the environment, to food miles.

Exeter Diocese

There have been numerous projects and events in the diocese on food, diet and the environment – such as a "Food for Thought" conference.

The Big Lunch

Churches in different parts of England were among the 2 million people who took part in the Eden Project's "*Big Lunch*" local food festival on 19 July 2009.

See <http://www.thebiglunch.com/the-first-big-lunch.php>. *The Big Lunch* is primarily a social event, to bring people together and promote social cohesion. It also has environmental benefits. It is safe to say that green projects will be most successful, and influence people's responses to climate change and the environment most effectually, when they are also social occasions.

Expansion of the scope of *Shrinking the Footprint* from climate change mitigation with successive phases to cover water and biodiversity first, then other wider issues including transport, waste, land and food.

Pursuant to the commitment to achieve "One Planet" status by 2050, by 2016 *Shrinking the Footprint* should develop a *Sustainable Land Use Strategy*, covering energy, climate mitigation/adaptation, farming, food, biodiversity, churchyards and community access to property.

Discussions and partnership will be sought during 2010 in assessing scope for use of other church-owned land where suitable and acceptable for renewable energy schemes, and community food-growing projects.

Many churches and dioceses have embraced *Fair Trade* produce and encouraged purchasing of locally grown foods and organic produce along with *Fair Trade* goods.

Ethical and sustainable food will become one of the *Shrinking the Footprint* themes, as the programme expands from initial focus on buildings and carbon management.

This theme should bring with it opportunities for projects, celebrations, artistic commissions and reflective worship and prayer at all levels of the Church. Many parishes and congregations are already strongly engaged with it. The theme brings together many aspects of sustainability and environmental concern (over-use of fisheries, impacts of meat consumption, animal welfare, and so on)...

It is recognised there is a tension between promoting *Fair Trade*, buying from overseas, and the drive for locally grown produce and limiting food miles – albeit

products such as tea and coffee are not grown in the UK; therefore, if they are to be partaken of at all, it is a question of choosing which overseas supplier. Christians should follow the Archbishop of Canterbury's lead in thinking through these complex questions.

Church of Norway

The General Synod challenges Church of Norway national and diocesan councils to:

- develop a special field of activity in each diocese, linked to regional specialities (e.g. local food in the Diocese of Nidaros, Sellafield and oil exploration in the Diocese of Sør-Hålogaland).

Church of South India

When animals or birds are domesticated to provide food or other products or services, pay attention to ensure their proper care and welfare. Modern biotechnology techniques have made it possible to introduce changes in animals and birds to enhance the quality and or productivity of products derived from them life milk, meat, leather, etc., but such changes affect their natural lifestyles and may some times cause them considerable discomfort. The ethics of introducing such changes in living creatures needs to be examined in the light of scriptural teachings.

Lifestyles

Choose a day to fast. For 24 hours, eat no solid foods and drink only water and fruit juice. Set aside time to pray. Meditate on your broken relationship with creation and ask God to lead you to repentance and a new faithfulness.

Plant a corner of your yard or borrow a corner of someone else's. Learn what crops thrive in your climate, what pests might be likely to attack them, and how you might combat those pests with little or no resort to chemicals. Find out what organic fertilizers are readily accessible. If you prepare your own food, begin composting vegetable wastes (such as rinds, pulp, eggshells and seeds). This need not be an overwhelmingly complex process. Simply bury your waste in your gardening area, or deliver them regularly to a friend who gardens.

Global warming will harm people all around the world, especially the world's poor. It is estimated that over 150,000 people die every year, most in developing nations, from the side-effects of global warming, ranging from malaria to malnutrition, and the numbers could almost double by 2020.

Madhya Kerala Diocese is organising Green School awards, a deputation of environmentalists to all the parishes to deliver sermon on ecological Sunday, Eco-pilgrimage, Eco-clubs in all schools, competitions in eco-essays, seminars on eco-architecture, distribution of vegetable seeds...

Jesuits

“We are a community that has been trying intentionally in the past two years to put into practice more ecologically sensitive ways of living, from the goods we buy, the food we purchase and eat...”

We will run our retreat centres in an ecologically sensitive way, sourcing food as much as possible from local, organic, fair-trade sources and making sure that the buildings are audited according to local eco-standards. This will benefit nature as well as the retreatants who often are eager to experience God in nature while on retreat.

New Psalmist Baptist Church

New Psalmist has sought to educate its community on maintaining healthy lifestyles, implementing highly successful health fairs, and quarterly classes and workshops to improve overall health and reduce disease.

Our plan is to increase our involvement in our international schools by providing pastoral care, educational and medical services to Nairobi’s Redeemed Gospel Church and the Shadrack primary school. Additionally, New Psalmist would like to bring in its corporate partners, such as Feed the Children, to assist with providing food, feminine hygiene products, and HIV support at both Shadrack and RGC schools but will require funding to sustain effort.

The Catering ministry and adult students from our Life Empowerment classes explored creating gardens on the campus of the church this year. The ministries grew bell and banana peppers, cherry and tomatoes, zucchini, as well as a number of herbs, including dill, cilantro, tarragon, and parsley. Members of these ministries are seeking to create a larger garden at the new edifice. Additionally, these ministries are planning to teach members of the church and community the advantages to growing their own food as a means of returning to a simpler lifestyle and becoming more self sufficient. NPBC’s new edifice will showcase a café that will provide services to families throughout the community. It is our intent to provide a wide range of products that are made with organic and free range products.

Quakers

Friends House, which contains the central offices of the Britain Yearly Meeting, a restaurant, café and meeting space for hire, will build on its recent 'Good Egg Award' for using only free-range eggs by gradually implementing a strict food policy for its catering and restaurant services. This includes total food recycling by the end of 2009, a 35 per cent increase in organic produce and 40 per cent of food sourced from within greater London by the end of 2012.

Lutheran Church of Tanzania

Discourage consumption of packed, processed foods and promote fresh foods. The former carry packaging waste while a lot of the latter can be bought in organic baskets.

Daoist

It is the tradition in Daoism to pay great attention to quality of life and the practice of how to keep in good health. We will work to rediscover some of the ancient health practices within Daoism, and set up health-maintenance places within Daoist temples to provide food therapy, medicine therapy and healthcare programmes.

We prohibit the use of ingredients from endangered animal and plants in any Daoist healthcare food and medicinal remedies.

We call further for a Daoist simple life. Daoists should select their daily timetable and their food according to natural principles. Their lifestyle should be environmentally friendly.

Hindu

Hindu labeling scheme

The Hindu community has purchasing power. We want to develop a set of standards based on the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) that will assist the community in

ethical buying in line with its ethos and values. We propose a 'Hindu benchmark' for a range of products and services including renewable energy, ethically sourced food, transport, and other products and services that assist sustainable lifestyles.

We will initially work with temples to raise the environmental standards of food and other offerings, and the ingredients used in food sold in temple shops. We will also create a website that will list products and services that meet our standards.

We hope to start the labelling scheme in the UK before 2014 and to encourage the process in other countries.

Vegetarianism and compassionate living

Based on the principle of ahimsa – non-cruelty and non-violence to all living beings – we will collaborate with organisations who wish to promote a more compassionate lifestyle. It is now widely acknowledged that the meat industry is one of the largest contributors of greenhouse gases. To help address this, we will encourage all Hindus to consider reducing or eliminating meat from their diets.

Cruelty-free milk

Current milk production practices are not in line with Hindu ethics. Cows, which can live up to twenty years, are slaughtered after an average age of four years. Coupled with this, cows are mistreated and subject to a range of diseases.

The Bhumi Project will work closely with the Lotus Trust, which wishes to pioneer the production of cruelty-free milk for the Hindu community where no animals are sent for slaughter. The final aim is to set up a cruelty-free certification system and an ahimsa label for milk showing where milk has been produced with kindness.

Through this we hope to effect wholesale change in the way cows are treated and create a demand in the market for cruelty-free milk - a demand that will potentially draw support from many non-Hindus. The Lotus Trust is currently working to pioneer cruelty-free dairies in the UK. We will support this endeavour and work with them over the next nine years to achieve the stated aims.

Temple Garden and Green Pooja scheme

We aim to promote the development of temple gardens. Such gardens will use organic gardening principles and include the care of sacred plants. They will also be used to grow produce for use in daily offerings in the temples. We will work with local and national gardening organisations and experts to learn best practice and increase organic and sustainable standards.

Having clear temple standards will create a positive change in the habits of devotees. To foster this, we will encourage devotees to develop their own gardens at home and grow their own food.

Closely linked with the development of temple gardens is the Green Pooja Scheme. Poojas, yajnas, and other ceremonies are a daily occurrence in Hindu temples and homes. Each of these make use of a variety of natural products and foodstuffs. For example, poojas and yajnas include the offering of rice, fruits, vegetables, and ghee into a sacrificial fire, an aarti ceremony includes the offering of flowers, incense, and water to the deities.

The cumulative amount of products the Hindu community uses worldwide in these ceremonies is substantial. We wish to promote and create an attitude of local and organic procurement for such items. Where it is not current practice or possible to grow these items in the temple garden we will advocate that they be sourced within a 30-mile radius, where possible. Doing so will not only support local organic farmers and reduce the carbon footprint of the items, but bring about a change in consciousness regarding what is deemed a suitable devotional offering for such ceremonies.

Hindu festivals attract large numbers of pilgrims to temples – often tens of thousands. Some temples attract thousands of visitors on a daily basis. From travel to the temple to the plates on which food is served – all can have a significant impact on the environment.

A team will be formed to help each Hindu festival and gathering to incorporate a respectful and protective attitude towards the planet. The team will work with individual temples and communities to implement best practice based on a series of workshops and seminars.

Aspects of the festival that will be considered are:

- Using recycled paper for printing promotional materials.
- Using bio-degradable plates, cups and cutlery for serving food.

Interfaith

GreenFaith (US)

GreenFaith will develop a series of resources to enable members of religious communities to learn a religious basis for various aspects or areas of sustainable consumption, to learn practical strategies for implementing sustainable consumption

habits, and to read success stories featuring people from diverse religious backgrounds. We have already begun to create such a resource on sustainable food habits, and we will initiate research soon on solar energy.

Jewish

The vision for the next generation is that eating practices evolve in ways that are both ecologically beneficial and consonant with Jewish food teachings and for a Jewish community that's measurably healthier and more sustainable with respect to food choices.

Learning the old rhythms of simplicity and feasting. If we're successful, we hope that in 2015 American Jews will be a role model to other communities in celebrating Shabbat and holidays – Jewish and secular, national and personal – with great joy, and gatherings, and song, and wonderful feasts; and that during the other six days of the week we'll eat more lightly and more simply. Our motto will be that of our teacher, Michael Pollan: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants..."

In Judaism, food is a basic area in which we strive to attain kedusha, holiness. It is fully congruent with this idea to explore how the way we eat today in the West generates ethical costs and environmental damage that compromise the ideal of holiness.

Kashrut:

Kashrut can consider whether produce that is grown at the cost of huge ecological damage, food that travels thousands of miles to reach us, factory farmed animals that are raised in great cruelty are fit to eat. We seek to build upon, paradoxically, also to move beyond the concept of eco-kashrut that was coined in the 1970s. "Eco-kashrut" suggests that the ecological destructiveness of our food choices is a fringe concern lying outside the purview of mainstream kashrut itself. Today we need to question this notion. The often destructive nature of industrial food production challenges both ordinary Jews and halakhic decision makers to consider whether and how kashrut should take account of these new realities.

Berakhot:

Blessings are the tradition's way of enabling us to express gratitude. The blessings can be understood and practiced as a system of engendering mindfulness towards the gifts of Creation. When someone says a food blessing they pause to consider the origin of the food item to identify whether it grew on a tree, in the ground or in the sea. It is but a small step to extend that moment of awareness to reflecting on the circumstances under which the food was grown, whether in a way that nurtured the earth, or harmed it, whether in a manner that respected the creature that is about to be consumed. In that way, nurturing awareness can lead to change.

Following the Agriprocessors scandal American Jews are far more aware of the real costs and consequences of their food choices. In Judaism, food is a basic area in which we strive to attain kedusha, holiness. It is fully congruent with this idea to explore how the way we eat today in the West generates ethical costs and environmental damage that compromise the ideal of holiness.

We would argue that reducing meat consumption as a communal norm is fully in the spirit of the Kosher Dietary laws. The Laws of Kashrut, are, at least in part, about minimizing the pain and suffering to the animal in the slaughtering process. We now know that it is only possible to eat large quantities of affordable cheap, kosher meat if the animals that are consumed are industrially raised in ways that cause them suffering throughout their lives and at their deaths.

Reducing meat consumption would also have tangible environmental and ethical benefits. According to the UN, 18% of global greenhouse gases are produced by livestock. At a time of global food shortages, 50% of grain grown in the US is fed to animals. We will therefore propose a goal of cutting communal meat intake by half by 2015.

Further, meat that is eaten should be humanely and locally raised where possible. Initiatives such as Mitzvah Meat and Kol Foods are making kosher, pasture-fed, meat available in the United States. Supporting these startups will help make humanely produced kosher meat much more widely available.

The fair treatment of workers in the meat processing industry is an essential element of kashrut.

We propose reframing berakhot as mindfulness meditations so as to make them accessible for non-Orthodox Jews. By 2015 the goal should be that a greater proportion of Jews will say berakhot, mean them, and reflect on the sources of the food that they eat and the process by which that food reaches their supermarket shelves and dinner plates.

Food Goals:

- Cutting communal meat intake in half by 2015.
- A greater proportion of Jews saying berakhot and reflecting on source of the food they eat and the process by which that food reaches their dinner plates.
- A greater proportion of food eaten in Jewish institutions is locally grown. Hazon's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, Tuv Ha'Aretz, fosters partnerships between synagogues and JCCs and local sustainable farms. It has 30 affiliated communities across the US today and aims to increase this to 180 by 2015.
- Marked reduction in food security and hunger in all communities. Growth of programs such as Challah for Hunger, Table to Table, Hazon Yeshayah, Mazon

and AJWS will have grown strongly, so that American Jews are raising and donating more dollars to help people directly in need.

- Re-learning the old rhythms of simplicity and feasting. If we’re successful, we hope that in 2015 American Jews will be a role model to other communities in celebrating Shabbat and holidays – Jewish and secular, national and personal – with great joy, and gatherings, and song, and wonderful feasts; and that during the other six days of the week we’ll eat more lightly and more simply. Our motto will be that of our teacher, Michael Pollan: “eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants...”
- Prepare for the next shmita year. (Shmita (Sabbatical Year) is the practice of letting the land rest one year in every seven.) Physically and spiritually our communities and our farmlands will be prepared to implement the laws of shmita by the time of Rosh Hashanah/Sept 2015.

The Food Bill

Hazon is coordinating a Jewish ethical and policy input to the 2014 US Farm Bill. The thrust will be towards cutting subsidies for industrial mono-crop production, supporting local and organic food, and reducing the American food systems dependence on fossil fuels. (Today US food production and transportation contributes between 25 and 37% of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions.)

Food	Education	Action	Advocacy
<p>Individual & Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn and Read about food choices, and their impact in the world http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues http://jcarrot.org/resources/books-films-and-cool-stuff • Attend events and programs that discuss food issues http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/conference/2009FC/theHazonFoodConference.html • Reading resources that help guide sustainable food purchases http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx (food chart) • Read: the Omnivore’s Dilemma by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat less meat • Join a CSA – or found one http://www.localharvest.org/csa/ • Support your local Farmer’s Market • Buy Local and Organic • Compost http://www.howtocompost.org/ • Be less wasteful, only take what you will eat! • Make small changes—ex: avoiding dairy products with hormones, purchasing cage free eggs • Buy in bulk (less costly and more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak up for change in your community: writing to a local official – or a national one https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml • Attend local town hall meetings / community events to speak up for local food at schools, synagogues, community centers • Sign-up for national advocacy alerts

	<p>Michael Pollan and Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser</p> <p>http://www.foodincmovie.com/reading-list.php</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the film Food Inc. (Food Inc Website) and the documentary Renewal <p>http://www.foodincmovie.com/index.php</p> <p>http://www.renewalproject.net/</p>	<p>environmentally friendly!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant a vegetable garden <p>http://www.backyardgardener.com/veg/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No high fructose corn syrup! • Use reusable bags when food shopping 	<p>http://sierraactivist.org/</p> <p>http://liveearth.org/</p>
<p>Institution: Synagogue, Community Center, School or other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a class a few times a week or month on Jews, food & contemporary issues <p>http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/curriculum/HazonFoodCurriculum.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach and discuss kashrut with a specific focus on how it applies to environment <p>http://rabbimorrisallen2.blogspot.com/omental_sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a Community Supported Agriculture program at your institution, such as Tuv Ha'Aretz <p>http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/CSA/aboutTuvHa%27Aretz.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine all food sourcing in your institution – how can you make sure that food served is more sustainable and ethical in all respects? Refer to Hazon's "Greening Food Guide" (in the works) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to elected officials, host events to bring awareness and discussion to these issues • Partner with environmental organizations and other institutions to work together to help enact change

Muslim

The Muslim 7 year plan includes a proposal to establish Islamic Labels for different products, including food.

EcoSikh

Buy locally grown and organic foods: this is a great way to support local farming initiatives. Many communities around the world have outdoor markets or farmer's markets where local farmers come to sell their produce. Buy from these places when you can, rather than from stores that import their produce, in order to stay healthy and support the local economy

Plant herb gardens for home cooking: many herbs can grow in small gardens outside of your house or even in pots that you keep on your window sill or balcony. These plants help to purify the air we breathe and give you immediate access to fresh herbs.

Support food sustainability initiatives such as farmer's markets

Support seed banks and biodiversity initiatives: many organizations in India are combating the negative fallout of the "Green Revolution" and need help to secure the preservation of biodiversity

Learn about the impact of your food choices on the global ecosystem. Learn about the impact of transportation choices

Gurdwaras – invest in copper storage pots to sterilize water