

Questions and Answers that we did not get to during the webinar

Q: Are there initiatives to get school going children involved? Teaching should evolve around the development of the child in contact with nature.

Janet Power: this is exactly where the action on food systems change needs to start, at a very young age!. A lot of schools do have veg growing programs which is very positive but it would be great to see an even greater emphasis. Also there are surely different initiatives around the country involving schools and school age kids but we not all be aware of them.

Polly, Richmond Barracks: The National biodiversity data centre has a range of citizen science Projects Eg. The Butterfly and bumble bee monitoring scheme and Flower Insect Timed (FIT) count. that can be done by school age children under supervision. I have a range of Eco-logical gardening /Biodiversity themed workshops that have been developed for schools.

Q: How scalable is the redistribution of surplus local food from growers to food banks or hubs?

Joanne Butler: Scaling local food distribution where needed is about forming trusted partnerships with local farmers and producers. By creating direct relationships between food banks and local producers, surplus produce can be collected and distributed efficiently. This approach not only reduces waste but also supports local economies. Initiatives like “FoodCloud” have already demonstrated success by connecting businesses with surplus food to charities and support with local development companies can help bridge the gap in supporting the community and the food banks needs while providing the wrap around service as additional support.

Logistics also play a crucial role in scaling up distribution efforts. Collaborating with logistics companies and community volunteers like the helping hands in Donegal can help transport surplus food from a centralised hub to food banks more effectively. Establishing scheduled pick-up times and routes can minimise transportation costs and ensure timely delivery of fresh produce is also very important.

And finally, I think it is very important to monitor the outcomes of these initiatives continuously. Collecting data on how much surplus food is redistributed versus wasted will provide insights into what strategies are most effective, allowing for adjustments as necessary.

Q: Hello everyone, thank you so much for the inspiring presentations. Myself and two other women have set up a small farmers market in mid Kerry and have some local food producers as well as craft stalls. It's run for over a year now and is held once a month as it is a small rural area. We are struggling to find enough local food suppliers and also struggling to attract enough customers to make it a success. Education and awareness is a key aspect in terms of the local community showing up as you mentioned. My question is: Is there any support, advice or resources that could assist us in continuing our attempt to connect local food producers with customers?

Janet Power: In terms of advice and resources I suggest contacting Kerry local authority for support. The local authorities have climate action plans and sustainability targets to meet and the initiative you describe is within their remit. There are unfortunately data gaps within the short supply chain, from who are our food producers. It's also an issue with identifying who are the local producers in the area possibly. Perhaps send an email to info@talamhbeo.ie and I can see if we can help find further suppliers in your area.

Q: Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan here. I received unanimous support to a motion in Limerick City & County Council to initiate work on a Sustainable Food & Catering Purchasing Policy in the local authority and we wrote to the Minister for advice but none has come from the Department of Public Procurement as of yet.

Janet Power: Olivia, you are probably aware of the green public procurement strategy approved earlier this year, which states that 10% of food purchased via public procurement must be organic. While I have no insight into the implementation of this strategy it would appear that it aligns with your policy objectives.

Q: Would it be useful to start an online hub for local growers to work together on furthering the network's objectives?

Feminist Communities for Climate Justice: Yes we're be open to this - we believe that our Feminist Communities for Local Food working group is doing this/aiming to do this. You can join this Network [here](#) and from there, you will receive a welcome email with detail about joining the Network's working groups.