



# Global Food Issues

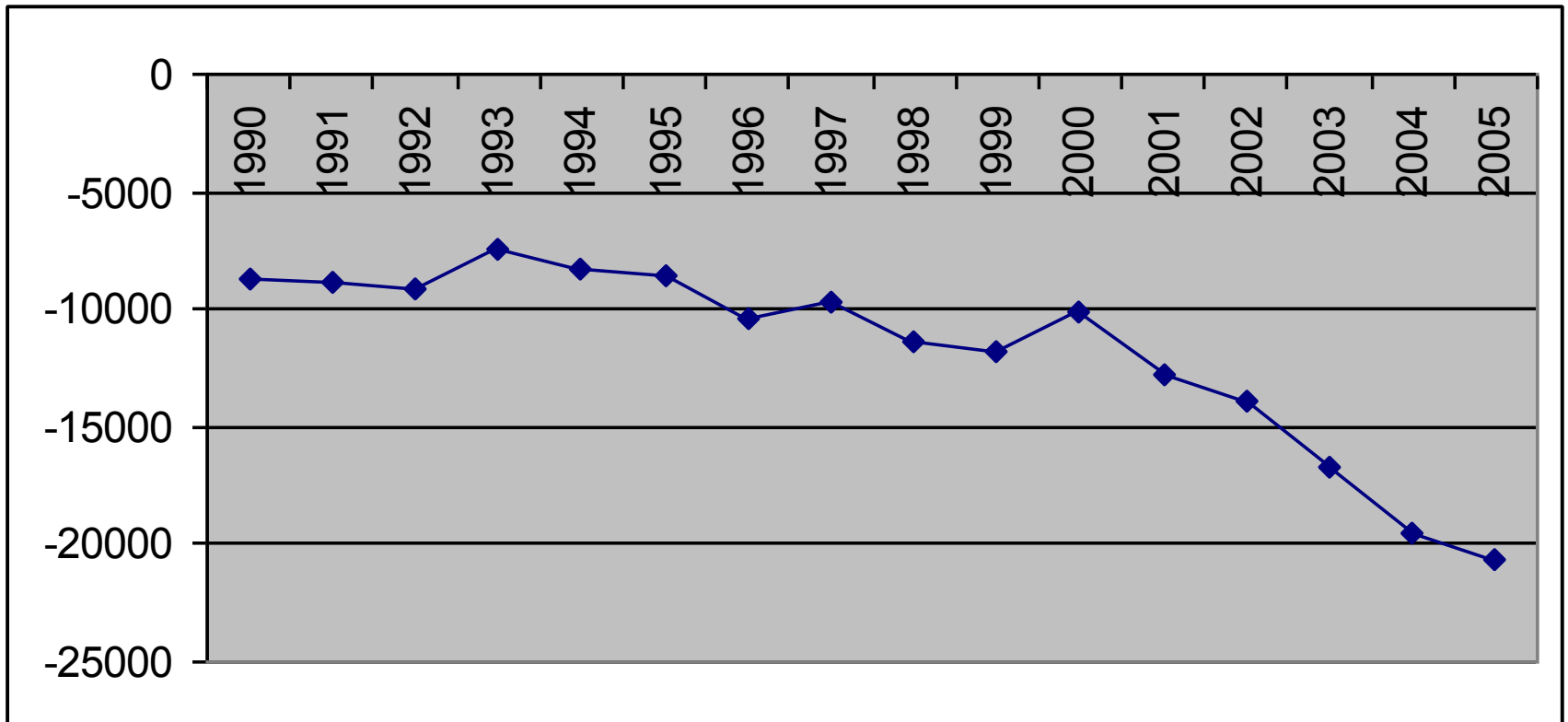
How environmental, secure and fair is our global trade system in food?



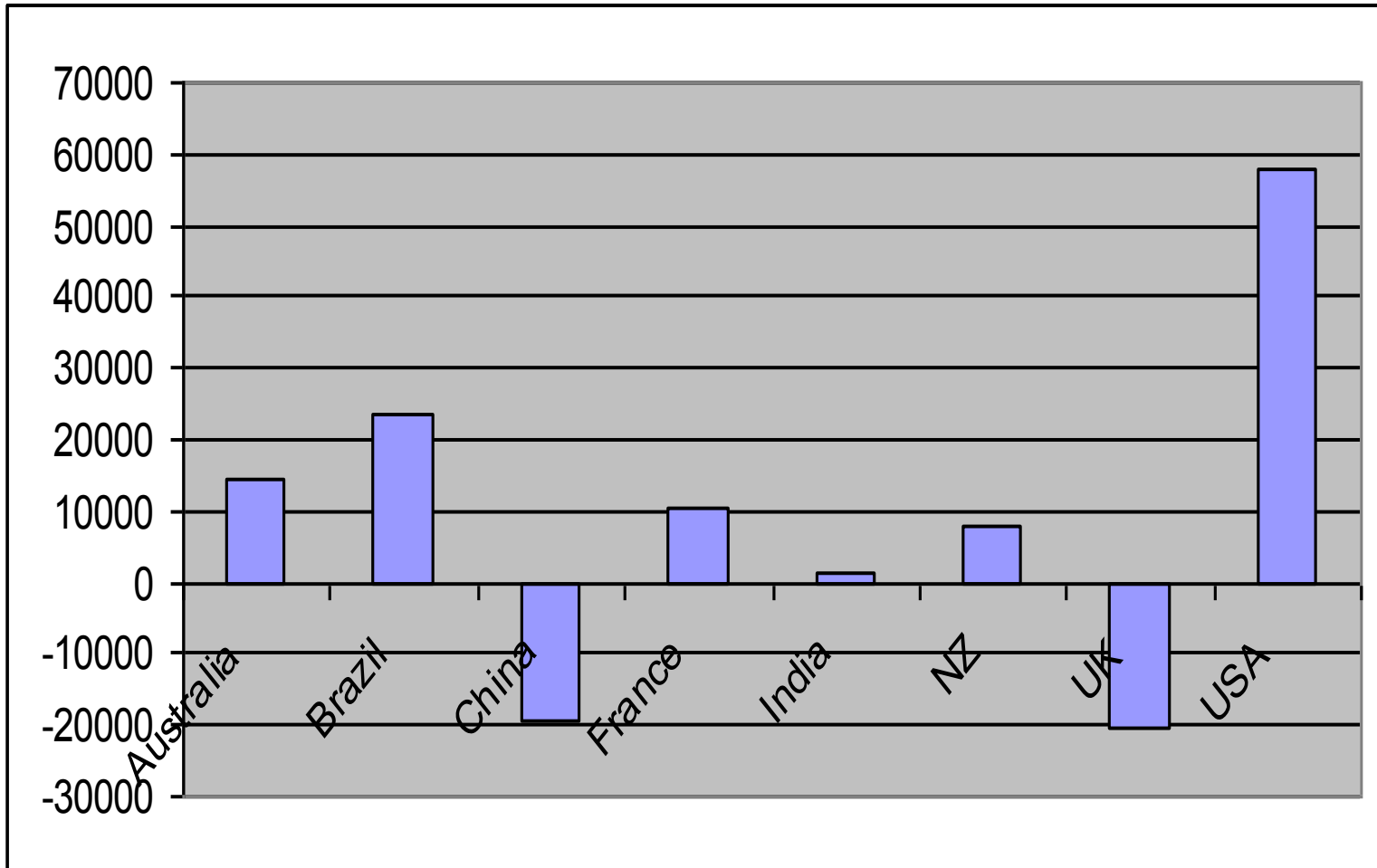
# Problems and solutions

- Food insecurity
- Global food economy and climate change and peak oil
- Reclaiming the food economy
- Importance of provenance and relationship

# Trade Gap in Agricultural Products in the UK, 1990-2005 (US\$m.)



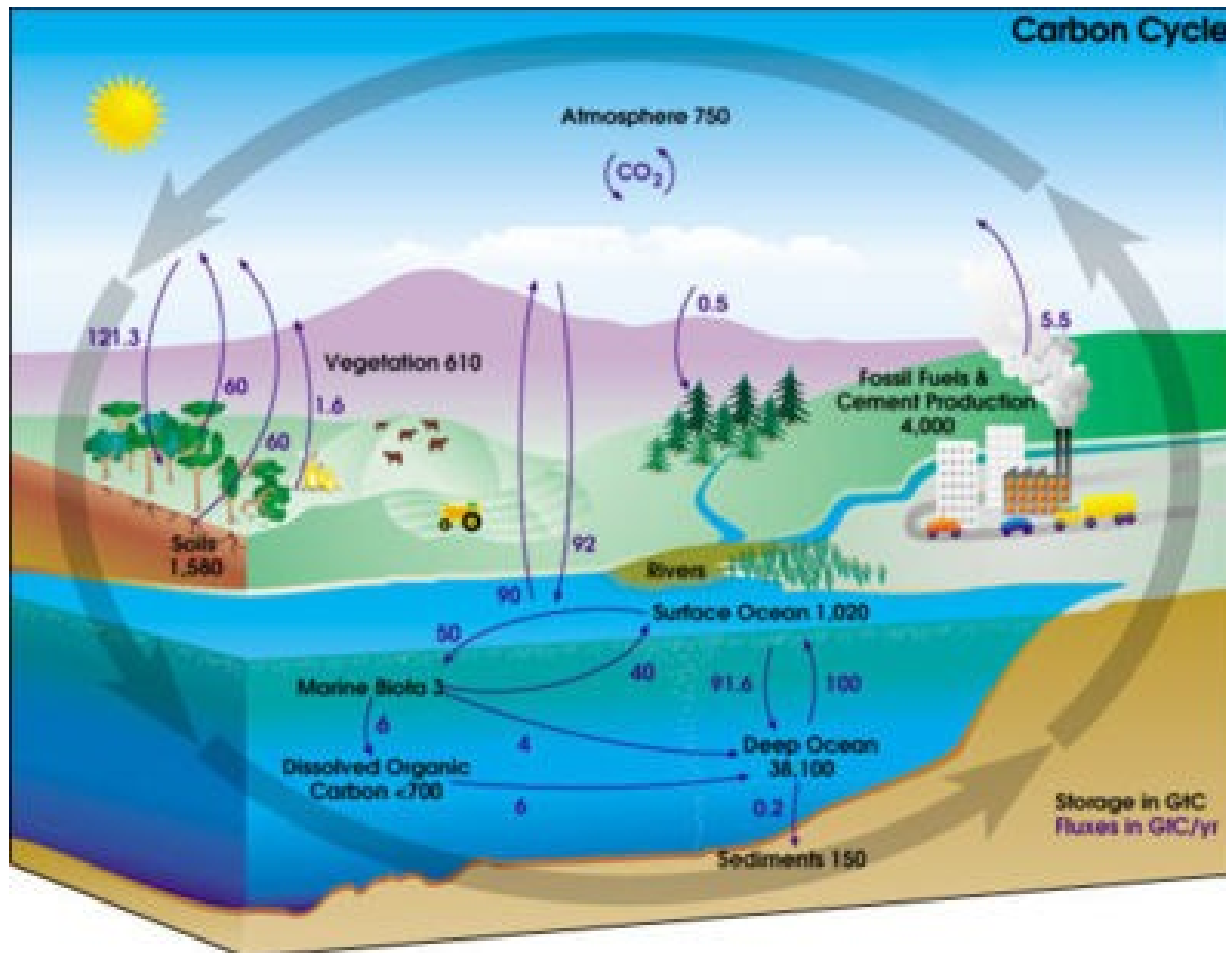
# Actual magnitude of food gaps for various country (US\$m.)



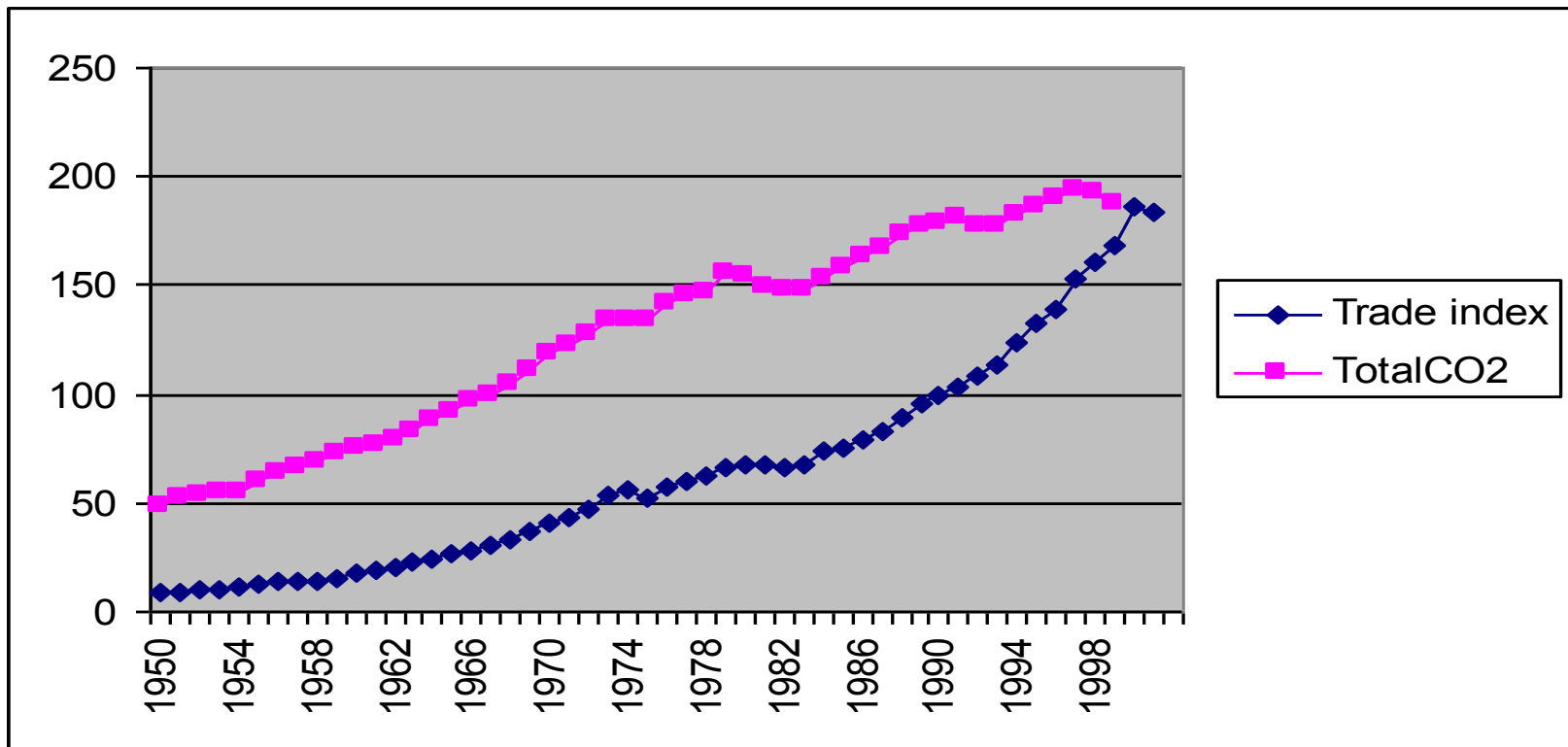
# Government attitude to food security

- No concern because 42% of imports are non-indigenous products
- Food security 'is neither necessary nor is it desirable'
- Seasonality is unimportant 'with out-of-season imports from the southern hemisphere enabling food retailers to stock a full range of produce all year round'.
- 'Comparative advantage dictates the pattern of trade in a liberal world trading environment, with countries concentrating on the production of goods that utilize its resources in the most efficient way'.

# Carbon cycle



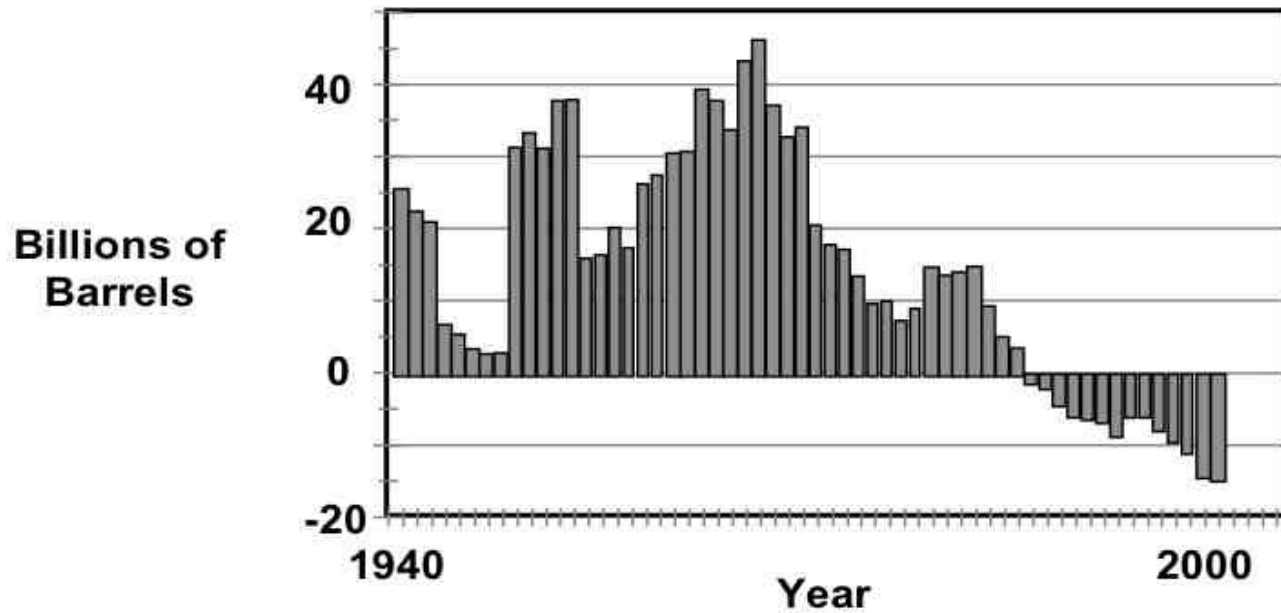
# The environmental cost of trade



# 'Sustainable Consumption Institute'

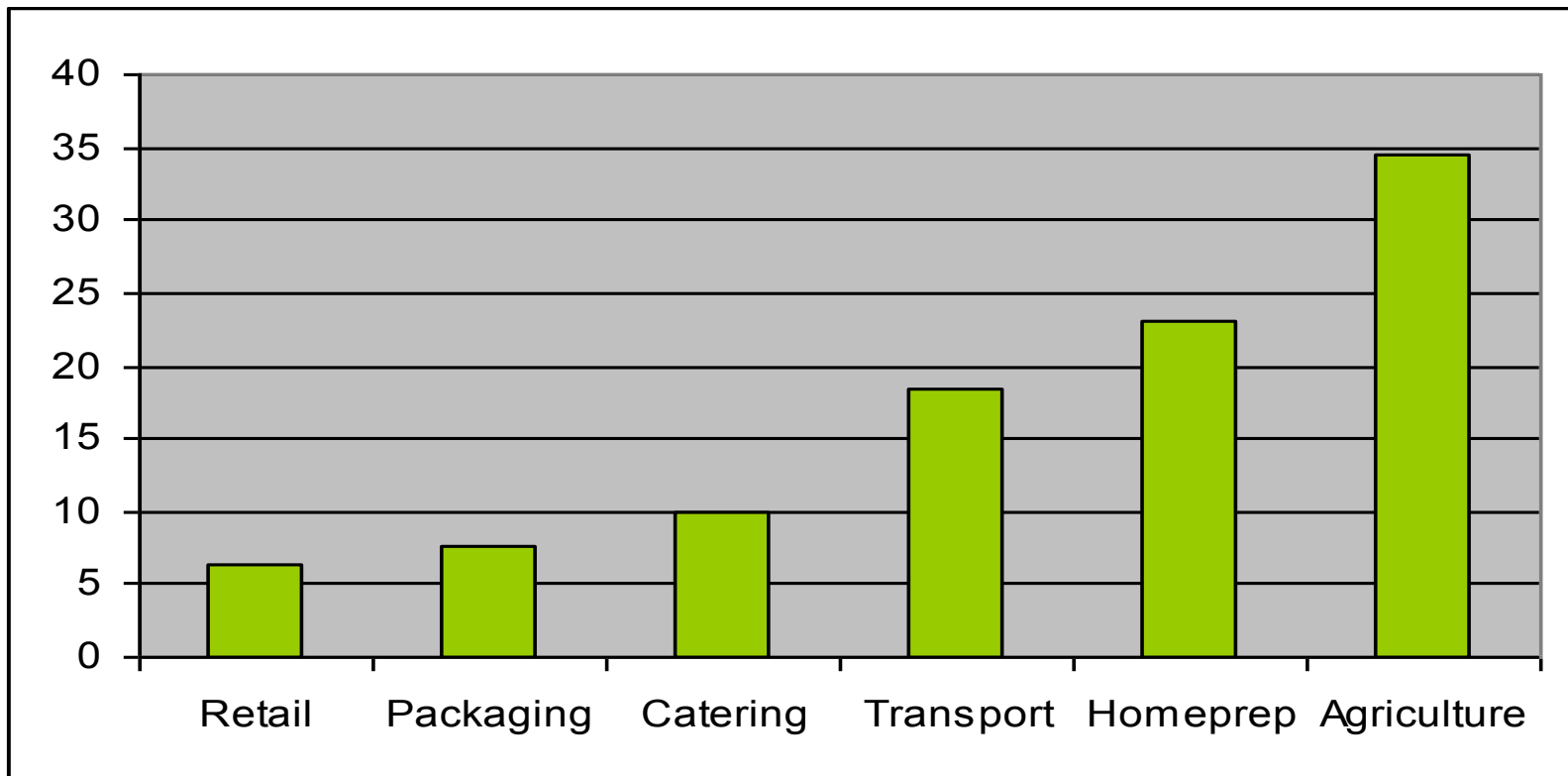
- Funded to the tune of £25m. by Tesco at Manchester University
- 'encouraging shoppers to buy more green products and also look at new technologies which could cut down on harmful emissions and landfill'
- 'a focal point for the next generation of researchers, policymakers and advisers in the area of sustainable consumption through an extensive postgraduate training programme'





**Figure II-1. Net Difference Between Annual World Oil Reserves Additions and Annual Consumption**

# Percentage of oil used in different aspects of food production and distribution



Source: Lucas, Jones, and Hines (2006), *Fuelling a Food Crisis*

# Colin Tudge on self-reliance

- *A system of farming that was truly designed to feed people and to go on doing so for the indefinite future, would be founded primarily on mixed farms and local production. In general, each country . . . would contrive to be self-reliant in food. Self-reliant does not mean self-sufficient. . . Self-reliance does mean, however, that each country would produce its own basic foods, and be able to get by in a crisis.*

# Let's think about . . .

- Bananas
- (thanks to Pamela Robinson of Cardiff School of Social Sciences)



# The Global Banana Trade

- Three major banana TNC producers: Chiquita International, Dole Food and Fresh Del Monte Produce
  - The global market is estimated to be worth approx. US\$ 5bn (cost prices), around 6.5m tonnes
  - The three TNC producers supply approx. 56% of the world's bananas
- Other key operators
  - Fyffes, H. Pratts are wholesalers to the UK market

# Global Banana Supply Chain

- Supermarkets dominate the fresh food market in the UK
- The annual retail market for bananas in 2007 was worth in excess of £575m (retail prices)
- Approximately a 140 million bananas are consumed each week, 7 billion each year
- Bananas are the biggest selling fruit item in the UK grocery market—took over from apples in 1998



# Work on Banana Plantations

- WORKING CONDITIONS ARE SAFE AND HYGIENIC

## From the Field

“Farms do this [aerial spraying] all the time, workers have to move to one side of the field, but chemicals spread in the air – it is a problem always” (Harvester, F26, March 2006).

“A cloud of chemicals hangs over us... we carry on working – that’s how it is in the field” (Harvester, F26, March 2006).

## From the Field

“A helicopter sprays overhead, [we] have to spray the field every 8 days, it is always in the afternoon when the workers have gone home, other farms do it in the morning, which is a danger to the workers... but not here, we have to comply with the standards” (Supervisor, F26, March 2006).





# The Ethical Dilemma

- *Why is it that bananas, a non-indigenous and highly perishable fruit, is one of the biggest selling food products on the shelves of UK supermarkets today? And why are they so cheap?*

“Customers can make changes for banana workers... [we] need customers in the UK to wake up to the plight of the banana worker”  
(Packer, FG21, March 2006).

# Banana wars—1999-2001

- Lomé Convention allowed favourable treatment for former colonies in the Caribbean



- Only 7 per cent of Europe's bananas come from the Caribbean, US multinationals controlled 75% of the EU market
- The Clinton administration took the "banana wars" to the WTO within 24 hours of Chiquita making a \$500,000 donation to the Democratic Party



# Growth in fair trade

- Figures from the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International indicate that consumers worldwide spent £1.1bn on certified products in 2006—an increase of 42% on the previous year.
- Particularly large increases were found for cocoa (93%), coffee (53%), tea (41%) and bananas (31%).

# Let's think about . . .

- Eggs



# Battery farm: concentration camp for chickens!





# Rescue a hen!

- Battery Hen Welfare Trust
- Battery hens are killed after one year
- EU legislation will ban battery eggs from 2012





# Local produce in supermarkets

- Tesco has set a target of £400m. of local produce in 2008, rising to £1bn. by 2011
- Local roadshows to cut deals with local producers – more than just a show?
- Councillors Gwynedd complained that some 'local' food travelled as far as 175 miles.
- Does not fit with central distribution model

# Reclaiming the Food Economy

- Stroud Community Agriculture
- Farmers market
- Fordhall Farm
- Stroud Brewery



# Stroud farmers' market



# The convivial economy

- Relationship and provenance
- North Aston organic dairy
- Community composting

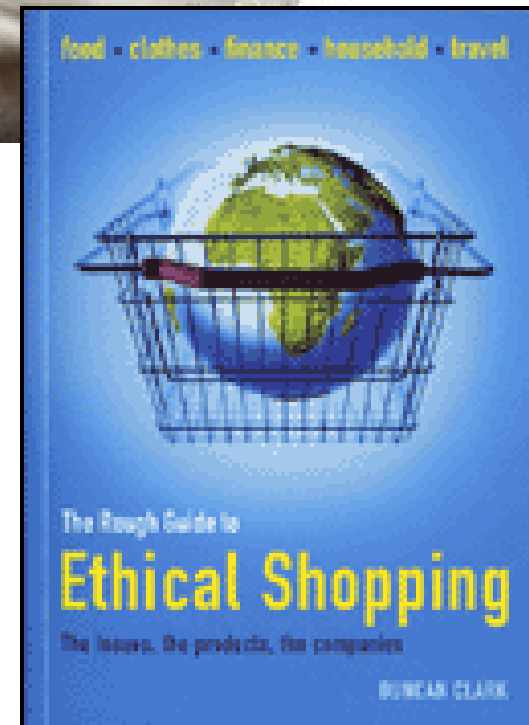


# 'Organic' supply chains

- Greening the supply chain: life-cycle analysis
- Localisation vs. centralised distribution  
e.g. milk
- Fair trade—co-operative and organic?
- Solidarity economy and local-to-local trade, globally
  - La Jimena

# Ethical consumption

- Spending power as substitute for politics
- Boycott campaigns, e.g. fur or Israeli products
- Positive buying, e.g. fair trade, cruelty free, organic, recycled, re-used, or produced locally



# Stroud Community Agriculture



# Apple day





# Celebration!



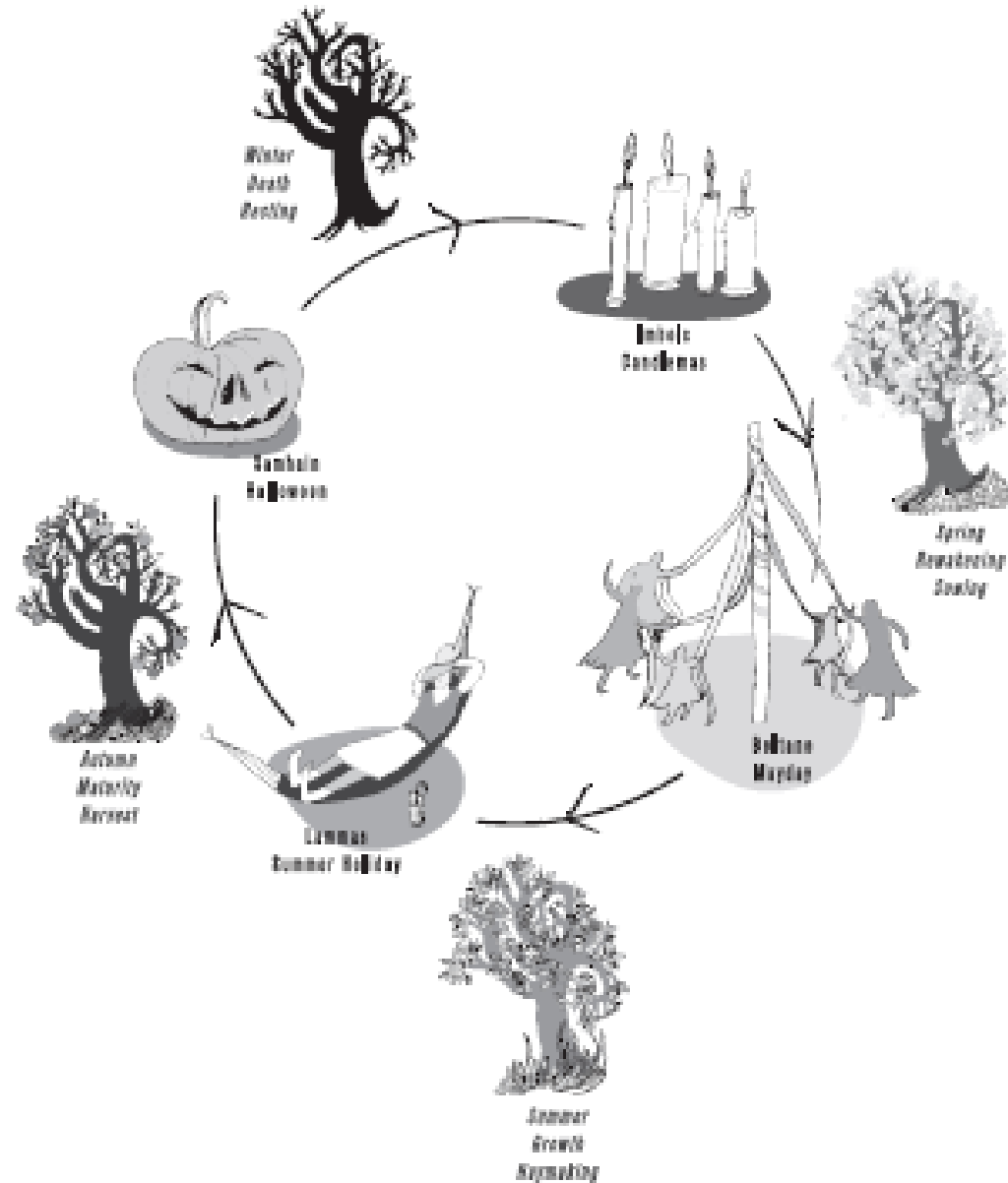
# Preservation



- Close to zero food miles
- Genuine ownership
- Production not just consumption
- Seasonality and concept of 'share'
- Annual cycle and community in festivals



# Seasonality and the annual cycle





# Permaculture principles for growing on land

- Working with nature saves energy
- Make the least change for the greatest possible effect
- The yield of a system is theoretically unlimited (or only limited by the imagination and information of the designer)
- Everything gardens (or modifies its environment)