

Alternative and local food: concepts and practices

Session 1 – Introduction

Daniel Keech

Countryside and Community Research Institute
University of Gloucestershire, UK
dkeech@glos.ac.uk

Masaryk University, Brno, 1st – 4th October 2013

Overview of the course

Together we will:

- Explore the changing role of food in society over the last 2-3 decades, with particular emphasis on local food alternatives.
- Critically consider the main narratives and policy debates around food supply, production and consumption, including the complexities and inter-connectedness of local and non-local food.
- Use a small number of local case studies from the UK and Germany to introduce some potential local food analysis methods.
- Carry out independent research which aims to help students demonstrate and communicate their grasp of the issues covered.

Course progression (1)

Session 1: Tues 1st October, 10.00 – 11.40

Introductions, overview, research exercise

Session 2: Tues 1st Oct, 14.00 – 15.40

Changing narratives: debates about sustainability and security

Session 3: Wed 2nd Oct, 14.00 – 15.40

Responses from civil society; case study 1 – Community

Supported Agriculture

Course progression (2)

Session 4 – Thurs 3rd Oct, 8.00 – 9.40

Case study 2 – Farmers' markets in the UK

Session 5 – Thurs 3rd Oct, 16.00 – 17.40

Case study 3 – Third sector juice schemes in Germany.
Preparations for session 6.

Session 6 – Fri 4th Oct, 12.00 – 13.30

Report back on diaries in groups. Summary. Close.

Working together

Small group: allows flexibility and informality

Questions can be asked as they arise; discussions may develop and be pursued where time allows.

However, a course outline has been provided and I will try to stick to this so that you know what to expect

I appreciate that English is not your first language. Please ask for clarifications where necessary. If there are problems talk to me, or to your course leader.

Research exercise (1) (feedback in session 6)

Get into pairs. Keep a diary keep of what you eat each day this week (from Tues – Thurs). **Discuss:** When you are buying food, what things do you look for and why?

When you have finished you can present your discussions to the rest of the group. See below:

Preference	Reason	Indicator
I buy ready-meals.	I don't enjoy cooking.	Cooking instructions
I buy the cheapest food available.	I am a student with not much money.	Price
I try to buy organic food.	I believe it's better for your health.	Certification label

Research exercise (2) (feedback in session 6)

Buying: What decisions were involved in making your purchases? Did you make any compromises?

Menu: What did you cook and eat and what decisions were linked to this?

Consequences: consider the sustainability issues of your meals and purchasing in this period (food chains; human and non-human actors; areas of tension etc...).

Changes: What would you change? What would you need to achieve that? Did local food help with any of these issues?

Example layout

Tuesday 1st Oct

Breakfast – Orange juice, toast and honey, coffee.

Lunch – Vegetarian meal from university canteen, pasta with tomato sauce. Chocolate bar.

Evening meal – Frozen pizza and frozen chips with salad from the supermarket.

Comments – Always buy fair-trade coffee. Am a vegetarian.

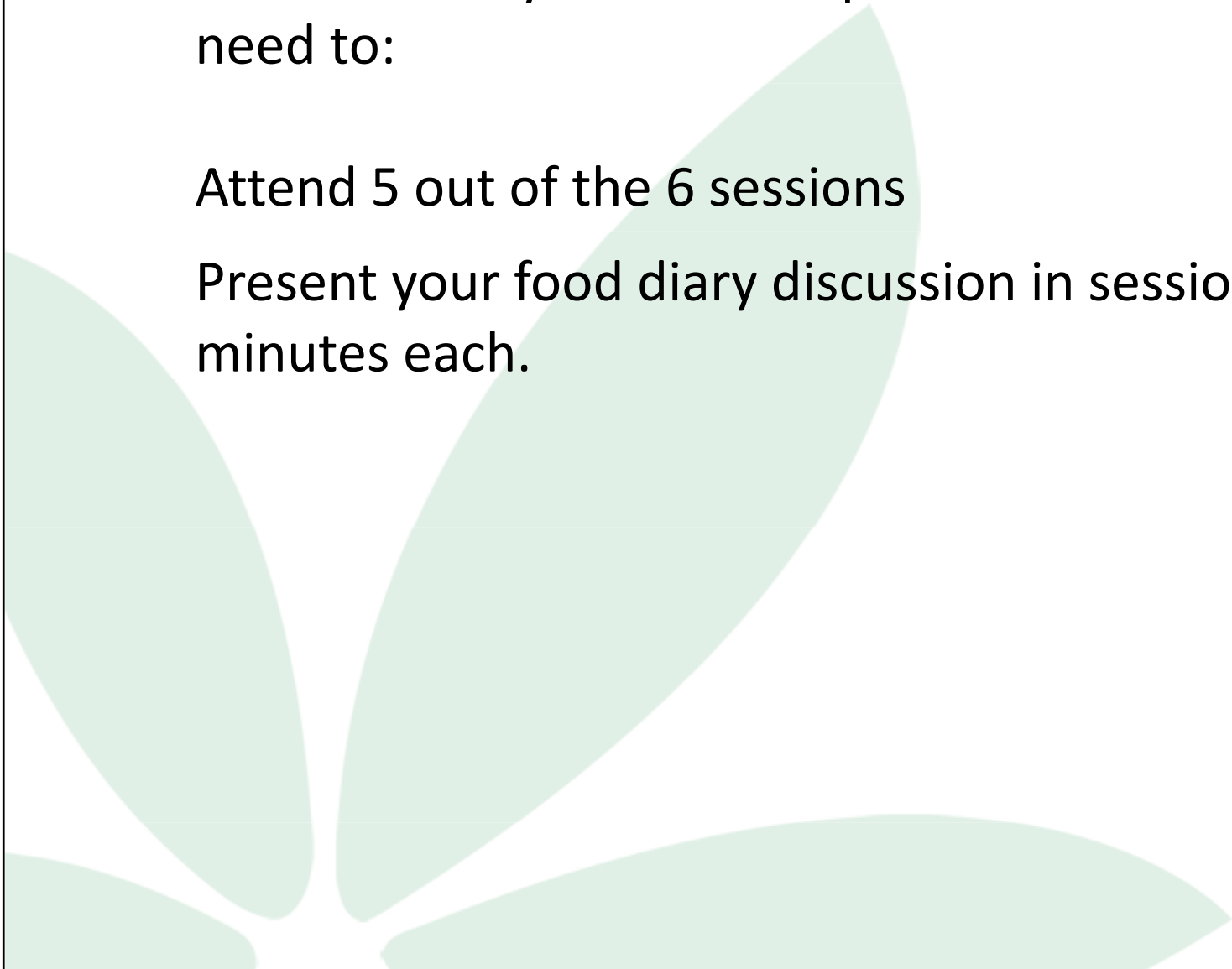
Just can't resist chocolate! Quick evening meal, it's only Tuesday and have work to do. Second coffee plus apple cake at new local produce café run by people I know.

Assessment of the module

To successfully fulfil the requirement of the module you will need to:

Attend 5 out of the 6 sessions

Present your food diary discussion in session 6 (in pairs, 10 minutes each).



Food diary presentation

Don't just describe what you bought/ate. Draw out critical reflections based on what we have discussed, for example:

- What social, ethical, economic, health, environmental factors inform your decisions?
- What are you trying to achieve, if anything (say why not)?
- Any narratives from academic literatures?
- Who are the people affected by your decisions?
- Possible conflicts and dilemmas you faced
- What needs to change to affect your behaviour? Who drives the change?
- Local food – how do they feature?
- Concluding summary remarks

Any questions so far?

Introducing one another (2-3 mins)

- Your name
- What you study
- What you hope to learn in this module

Thank you for your attention.

Next session today at 14.00.

Alternative and local food: concepts and practices

Session 2 - Changing narratives: debates about sustainability and security

Daniel Keech

Countryside and Community Research Institute

University of Gloucestershire, UK

dkeech@glos.ac.uk

Masaryk University, Brno, 1st October 2013

Plenty, healthy, quality?

Some generalised key developments post 1945:

- ‘Green revolution’ self-sufficiency and surplus for trade and aid
- Oil dependency highlighted in oil crisis of early 1970s (*see Jones, A. (2001) Eating Oil. Sustain, London; and AEA (2005) The Validity of Food Miles as an indicator of Sustainability.*)
- CAP production subsidies until 2003 \Rightarrow surpluses, global dumping, falling food prices for consumers. Supermarket dominance and foreign direct investment (FDI).
- CAP reform in 2003 \Rightarrow decoupling of subsidy from production and link to environmental stewardship

Plenty, healthy, quality? (2)

- Falling consumer prices until 2000s
- Environmental degradation (Carson 1966), food safety scares, growth of organic movement from 1990s (see Julie Guthman 2002 and Gill Seyfang 2006...)
- ‘Quality turn’ and shift from public to individualised concerns in 2000s – health, lifestyle, ‘alternative hedonism’ (Soper 2004)
- Obesity/famine paradox, the rise of social food co-ops in the absence of policy (see work by Elizabeth Dowler and Martin Caraher et al. 2001 onwards)

Food in the public arena

Public health concerns around dietary intake affected by structural and social changes:

- Fewer people work in agriculture, industrial settings, traditional family structures. Post-modern cities and working arrangements. 'On the hoof dining, convenience shopping'.
- Move in 1980s (in UK) away from institutionalised public catering to consumer choice, lowest price tendering and de-skilling kitchen labour. School cooks \Rightarrow food assembly.
- State abrogates public health to the private domain.

Food and social exclusion

Increased awareness of spatial health inequalities:

Jubilee line Westminster to Canning Town – a year less of life expectancy as you travel east nine stops. In other words, your average life expectancy in Westminster is 73/6 or 64/67 in Canning Town. DIET IS A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR.

This led in the early 2000s to the establishment of food distribution co-ops. Opens up debates about physical access, the attractiveness of poor areas to supermarkets and the stigmatisation of food co-ops.

In 2013 new research (Oxfam 2013) links food poverty and the rise of food donation projects (often church-led) to welfare reform.

Is food in crisis?

- Agriculture in the 'global north' depends on fossil fuels and accounts for 40% of CO2 emissions, produces fewer calories than it consumes and depletes biodiversity.
- C. 1bn people are starving while another 1bn suffer from diet-related ill health (acquired diabetes, CHD...) and obesity.
- Peak oil, gas, phosphorous, water, price volatility and social unrest linked to price increases...
- Population increases and urbanisation/rural migration.

Some theories linked to sustainable food - sociology

Anthony Giddens	Reflexivity Speed of change and profundity of consequences is unprecedented. Work out solutions together.
Thomas Lyson	Social structuration Scale and structure of farms affects social structure of settlements.
Manuel Castells	Social movements Typography of civil groups; use of new communications to organise.

Some theories linked to sustainable food - economics

<p>Leyshon et al., Gibson-Graham</p>	<p>Alternative/feminist economics Change from the margins; experimental models can be expanded; role of women as reproducers of social life.</p>
<p>Jackson</p>	<p>Limits to growth Current model of capitalist growth assumes endless natural resources. ('One planet living' – nef).</p>
<p>Beddington, Royal Society</p>	<p>Sustainable intensification Mobilisation of technology and resource efficiency to feed growing and urbanising world.</p>

Some theories linked to sustainable food - geography

<p>Van den Ploeg, Marsden et al.</p>	<p>Local as rural development Articulating values embedded in local foods and releasing value to farmers.</p>
<p>Winter; Edward-Jones; Garnett; Born and Purcell</p>	<p>Critiques of food miles Defensive localism; CO2 fetish; contexts of environmental performance metrics; the 'local trap'.</p>
<p>Morgan</p>	<p>Politics of care Local green and global fair – cosmopolitan, mixed food systems build around city-regions.</p>

What do we mean by sustainable food?

- Sustainable food is associated with well-being, environmental sustainability, social justice and resilience. (nef, 2007)*
- In other words sustainable food is healthy, green, fair (Morgan 2010) and able to withstand shocks.

*Sumburg, J. (2009) *Reframing the Great Food Debate: the case for sustainable food*. New Economics Foundation, London.

CO2 vs. social justice

Special report The human cost of food

How 'modern day slavery' on the Costa del Sol puts the salad in your shopping



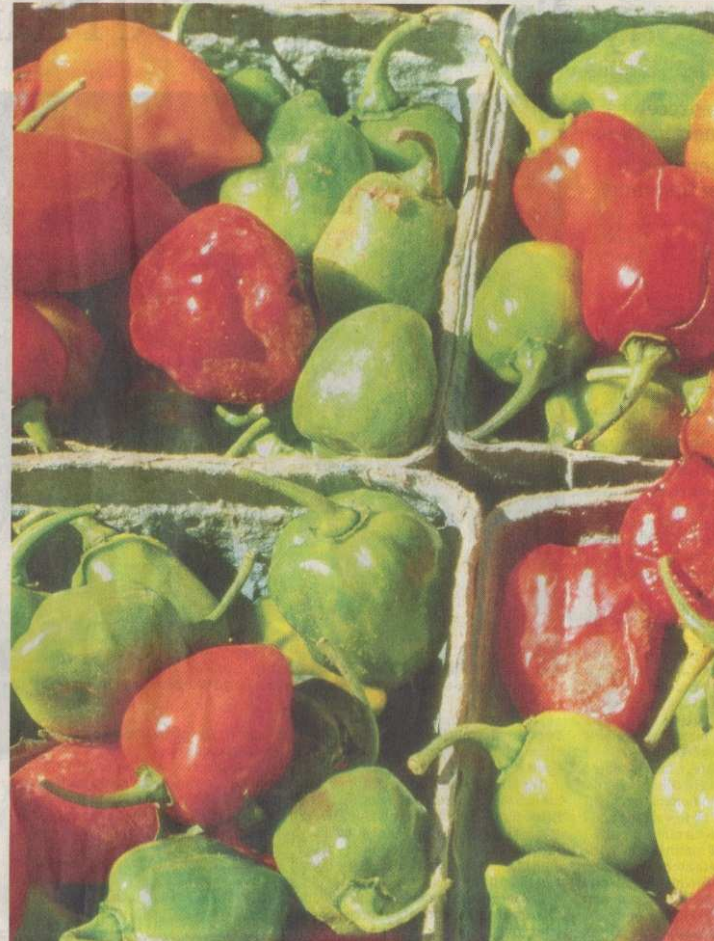
Felicity Lawrence reports on the exploited migrant workers, just out of sight of Spain's tourist beaches, who make possible a €2bn hothouse industry feeding Europe's supermarkets

with temperatures reaching 40-45C, is unattractive to the local population. So it has sucked in thousands of illegal workers, first from Morocco, then from eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

Estimates of the number working in the hothouses vary, but Juan Carlos Checa, researcher in social anthropology at the university, put the number of migrant workers in April 2010 at between 80,000 and 90,000.

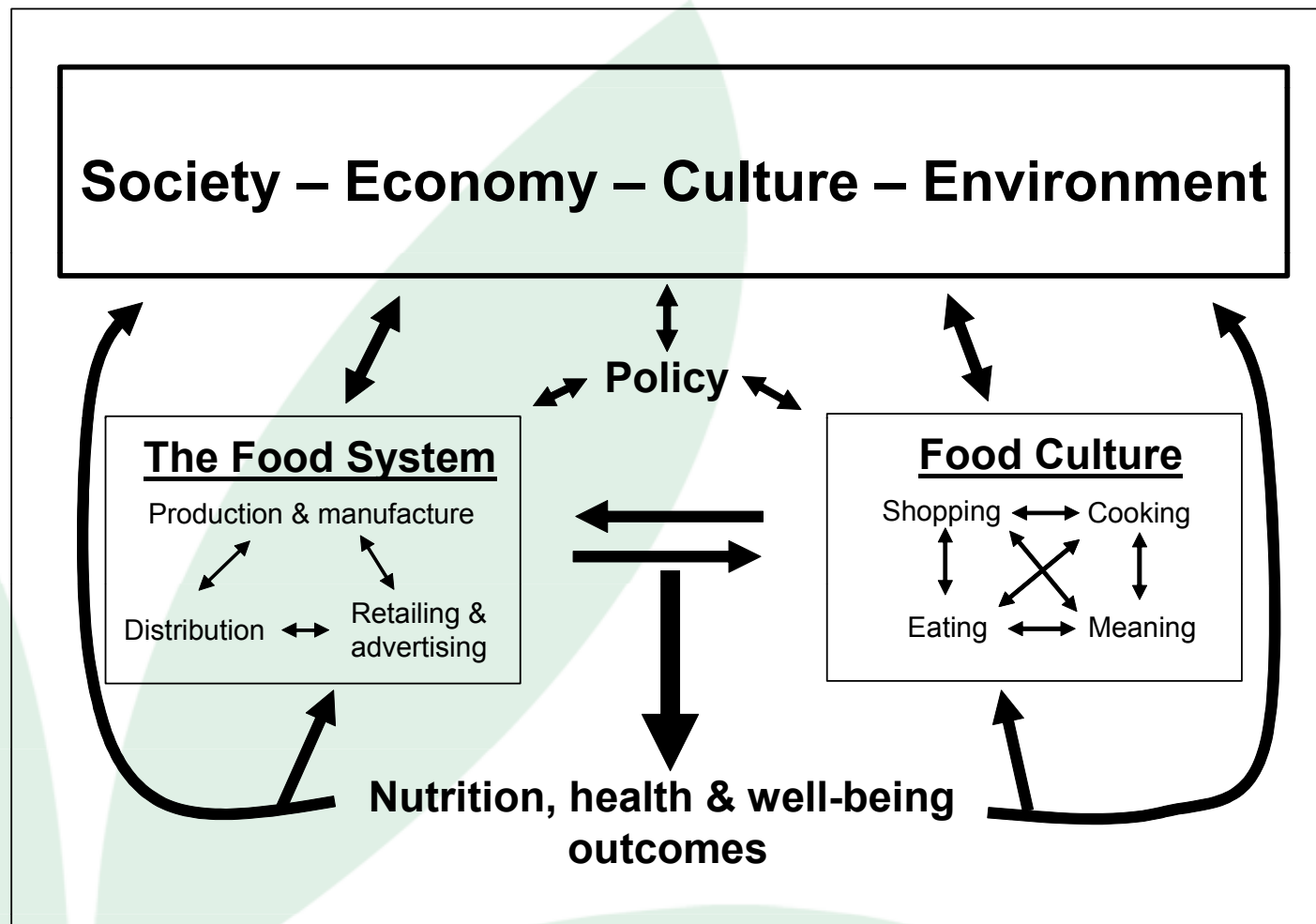
Spitou Mendy, who was an illegal migrant from Senegal until he gained his papers in an amnesty, now helps run Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (SOC), a small union for migrants. He thinks the numbers have swollen to more than 100,000 due to the recession.

The Spanish government allows those who can prove they have worked for more



Source: *The Guardian* 8th Feb '11

The interdependence of food system and food culture



Food system issues



Sustainable Food

Well-being

Social justice

Environ. Sust.

Resilience

Production

Impact of pesticides on nearby residents	Poor labour conditions Dependence on gang-masters	Degradation (soil, water, over-fishing) Habitat destruct'n	Highly energy intensive Dependence on migrant labour
------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

Processing & manufacture

More processing = harder to control salt fat sugar consumption			Dependence on global trade
----------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	----------------------------

Distribution

Road intensive = noise, pollution, traffic	Power balance against producers	Carbon intensive	Fuel cost
--------------------------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------	-----------

Advertising & marketing

Junk food adverts target children	Power balance against small or indep. shops		Consolidation of retail sector
-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

Disposal

		High levels of waste & packing	
--	--	--------------------------------	--

Source: *The Guardian* 8th Feb '11

Food culture issues



Sustainable Food

Well-being

Social justice

Environ. Sust.

Resilience

	Poor avail. of healthy food in disadvantaged areas Low income = inadequate for healthy diet	Expectation of year-round avail. of all products	
Cooking	Time poverty = more consumption of prepared foods		Falling levels of food 'literacy'
Eating	Loss of eating together		Fuel cost
Meaning	Disconnection to rural and farming issues		Homogenisation of food & places

Changing narrative - resilience?

Defra Narrative 2004	Defra Narrative 2010
<p>‘National self-sufficiency is neither necessary nor desirable.’ (Ministerial letter)</p>	<p>‘Our food system needs to be prepared for shocks and to be able to manage risk.’ (Food 2030: How we get there, Defra 2010.)</p>

Key beliefs in local and sustainable food



- It is better (healthier) to eat a more rather than a less diversified diet
- It is better (healthier) to eat fresh food rather than preserved/prepared food
- It is better (less environ. damaging, & food chain **more transparent**) to eat food produced closer to rather than further from the point of consumption
- It is better (healthier, and less environmentally damaging) to eat food produced with a minimum of pesticides
- It is better (less environmentally damaging) to eat food produced with a minimum of inorganic fertilisers
- It is better (more socially just) to eat food produced, processed and/or marketed by smaller-local rather than larger-international operations

(Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, London.)

NGO and market innovations

- Farmers' markets
- Hyperbolic organic sales (mainstreaming) (until 2008)
- Box schemes
- CSA and buying groups (growth since 2008: MLFW/LFF)
- Food Links UK/Alimenterra
- Public food procurement (FFL, SFT, free school meals)
- Food access co-ops

NGOs as civil society agitators → under-paid market innovators?

Possible questions emerging

- How can the ethical motivations of the alternative food movement underpin, the development of a greener, fairer and healthier system/culture? Who decides?
- How can the claims made for local food be substantiated? What implications have they got for a serious move to carbon-reduced and 'cellular economy' (Hardin Tibbs, BRASS 2011)?
- What (infra-)structures are needed to make sustainable food viable? (distribution, finance, governance...)
- Can the demand for ethical food be the basis for global solidarity, rather than nationalism, protectionism and stale local vs. global arguments?

Changing narratives

- Policy: Self-sufficiency \Rightarrow surplus \Rightarrow food security
- Politics: Sufficiency/price \Rightarrow environmentalism/common concerns \Rightarrow quality/personal concerns (e.g. health and taste)
- Retail power: Supermarkets as progressive \Rightarrow oppressive \Rightarrow appropriators
- Third sector: Oppositional \Rightarrow entrepreneurial \Rightarrow technical specialists

In summary...

Food is complex – farming, nutrition, education, consumption, industry, diet, culture, shopping, politics, income, planning, waste, political activism...

"...the concept of a base-line sustainability standard is non-sense, as sustainability is an aspirational open-ended agenda involving trade-offs and a range of potentially conflicting priorities..."

Smith, B. (2008) *Developing Sustainable Food Supply Chains*. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society for Biological Sciences. 363, pp. 849-861.

Organic, fresh, seasonal, local, fair-trade, affordable, safe...
How do we choose?

agri
community
research institute



Questions?

Next session

Wed 2nd Oct, 14.00 – 15.40

Responses from civil society; case study 1 –
Community Supported Agriculture



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



OP Vzdělávání
pro konkurenceschopnost



UNIVERZITA KARLOVA
V PRAZE

INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ