Overview of presentation

- Background
- Sustainable food – consumers
- Sustainable food - distribution
- Organic food systems
- Local food webs
- Research agenda for Australia
Sustainable academic life...

The horse: God’s gift to mankind or...

dangerous at both ends and uncomfortable in the middle?
Sustainable family life...
Global context...

- World food supply
  - challenge of producing more from less
Food supply chains

- Food service sector – ‘food away from home’
- Grocery sales - ‘food at home’
  - Supermarket chains dominate
Research expertise – sustainable consumption

- Niche food networks
  - Not well understood as under researched
  - Area of innovation
  - Niche today – mainstream tomorrow???

- Organic and local offer alternative, or complimentary, food webs
Complimentary food webs

- National food security contribution including
  - food democracy
  - system resilience

- Consumers
  - Reengagement with food supply
  - Sustainable consumption gateway
  - Part of transition to ‘low carbon’ future
‘Modern man has built a system of production that ravishes nature and mutates man.’

(Schumacher, 1974)
‘If organic products are better for consumers, and better for the environment, why are sales only 2%?’
Consumers - conclusions

‘Black box’ of human decision making

- 93% understand organic, 40% buy, 1% market share
- Context of buyer decision very complex...

Publications:
‘We used to be hunter-gatherers, now we're shopper-borrowers.’

(Williams, 2009)
Sustainable food - retailing

- Community based food co-op
- Research
Sustainable food – supply chain

- Community based food co-op with $700,000 T/O
- Research
Sustainable food - production

- $100 million program over 4 years, 1000 projects
- Research grants
  - ‘Growing True Food Co-ops Local Roots.’ Local Food Consortium for $217 000.
  - ‘Master Gardeners Programme - developing the model.’ Local Food Consortium for $999 800.
Sustainable food – household engagement

- Charity with 40,000 members and $10m T/O
- Research
  - Reinvigorating rural communities in Warwickshire. European Union LEADER for $3,300,000
  - GO 2007 Measuring your ‘Garden Footprint’ Garden Organic
Sustainable food – research group

- Collaboration of academics, farmers, retailers and activists
- Research
Local food

- Local food sector – reducing ‘food miles’
- Developing rapidly, eg in UK
  - Increasing demand from consumers
  - Support from charities, celebrity endorsements
  - Schemes funding community led initiatives

‘Local food buying offers a leisurely and pleasurable alternative to the generally convenient but dull supermarket shopping’
# Local food supply chains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Markets</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail food Co-ops</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box schemes</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Shops</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>≈</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>≈</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarkets</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principles of organic agriculture

- **Health**: soil, plant, animal, human, and planet
- **Ecology**: work with natural systems
- **Fairness**: equity, respect, stewardship to all
- **Care**: precautionary to environment and people

(International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements - IFOAM)
Organic food in Australia

- full product range **niche** market (1.5%)

- fresh **fruits and vegetables** are key
  - $5 per person/week (cf. alcohol $10)
  - minimal imports (6%), minimal home-grown (2%?)

- many consumers buy organic food
  - more **healthy**
  - higher **‘quality’**
  - protection of the **environment** less important
Research agenda - policy

- Justify perceived **sustainability** benefits
  - Identify the environmental, social and economic benefits of organic, and local, food
  - Identify production capacity from local, and organic, food
- Maintain **credibility** with customers
  - Develop some form of **consumer assurance** for ‘localness’ of foods
- Others...
Research agenda - practice

● Marketing organic food
  ● Explore the gap between ‘consumer perceptions’ and ‘scientific research’ on the health benefits of organic food
  ● Understanding consumer switching behaviour between organic and conventional products
  ● Do organic food purchases contribute to sustainability transitions?
  ● Others...
Research agenda - practice (cont.)

- Marketing local food
  - Identifying key success factors for ‘local food’ networks in Australia
  - Explore the possibility of providing a clearer **definition** of local food
  - Measure **size** of local food sector, including **production from gardens**
- Others...
Questions and comments...
Marketing organic food – articles by Dr David Pearson

- Pearson, D. In press ‘Exploring shopping behaviour to improve marketing of organic fruits’ *ACTA Horticulturae*.
Local food – Articles by Dr David Pearson


Websites relevant to organisations discussed in the presentation

- Transition towns [http://transitiontowns.org/](http://transitiontowns.org/)