

OXFORD: THE FIRST CITY IN THE WORLD TO BE 'FOODPRINTED'



A new 'FoodPrint Calculator', developed by social enterprise Landshare and sustainability consultancy Best Foot Forward, aims to help cities understand the impact of their population's diet on the environment.

Oxford is the first city in the world to be 'foodprinted' using the new calculator. Sustainability experts examined where its food comes from and how it is produced, as well as the energy sources, food waste and packaging involved. Using the calculator, the researchers estimated that feeding Oxford's population of 150,000 people represents 20% of the city's overall greenhouse gas emissions, and requires a total of 53,000 hectares of agricultural land, 6.6 million gigajoules of energy from fossil fuels, and 398 million tonnes of water, annually.

Importantly, the ‘FoodPrinting Oxford’ report, commissioned by the City Council, also highlights the risks in sustaining its diet. It includes recommendations to reduce its impact, such as sourcing more fruit and vegetables, reducing its dependence on meat and dairy, and cutting down on food waste and any unnecessary packaging.

“We recognised that a city’s food system represents a big part of its carbon footprint, and wanted to be able to quantify this and identify realistic, tangible solutions”, explains Jennifer Carr, the Council’s Sustainable Energy Officer.

“We’re now engaging all sorts of different groups, including businesses, supermarkets, policy-makers and consumers, to collaborate and take action by sharing the findings via our Low Carbon Oxford network, and running communications campaigns using a new video animation.”

The development of a foodprinting mark, to highlight the impact of, and potential food security issues for restaurants and businesses in Oxford, is also being discussed following on from a successful trial at the city’s Turl Street Kitchen, a member of the Sustainable Restaurant Association. Oxfam is a keen supporter of the FoodPrint calculator as a means of sharing knowledge on food security issues between UK and developing world cities.

“The FoodPrint Calculator provides both surprising research insights as well as strong campaigning messages”, comments Phil Bloomer, Director of Policy and Campaigns, Oxfam. “As we enter a new era of rising food prices and ecological crisis, we must act on food security – at a country and world level.”

Source: <http://thisbigcity.net/oxford-first-city-world-foodprinted/>