

# CIEH Draft Food Policy: A consultation document

November 2009

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The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) believes that access to a secure supply of safe and nutritious food is an essential requirement for a healthy society and that a sustainable food chain is a requirement for a healthy environment.

## Food policy objectives

The CIEH will work with its members; government, both central and local; partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors and other stakeholders to secure:

- Continuous improvements in food safety
- A transition to healthier diets
- Improvements in the sustainability of the food chain
- Equitable access to a secure supply of safe, nutritious and affordable food

The CIEH will seek to implement this through its work as:

- A professional body that sets standards and accredits courses and qualifications for the education of our professional members and other environmental health practitioners
- A knowledge centre that provides information, evidence and policy advice to local and national government, environmental and public health practitioners, industry and other stakeholders
- An awarding body that provides qualifications, events, and training and can provide support materials on topics relevant to health, wellbeing and safety
- A campaigning organisation that acts to push environmental health further up the public agenda and to promote improvements in environmental and public health policy

## Continuous improvements in food safety

The CIEH will support improvements in the safety of food by working with government, members, the food industry and other key stakeholders to:

- Develop new policy and strategy, utilising member expertise to identify potential barriers to effective implementation

- Identify effective, proportionate, risk based interventions designed to improve food safety
- Support the establishment of an evidence base to share knowledge about “what works” in improving food safety, nationally and internationally and promote good practice
- Support members through the identification of core training and guidance needs and the opportunities to address any identified gaps
- Ensure the provision of effective, high quality education and training for all those working in the food industry, in matters of food hygiene, allergen management and as appropriate food safety management systems
- Improve the understanding, knowledge and practice of food hygiene in the home through education, starting within schools

### **A transition to healthier diets**

The CIEH will support a transition to healthier diets by working with government, members, the food industry, other key stakeholders and communities to:

- Promote the benefits of a healthier diet, highlighting the influential position of environmental health practitioners in supporting and delivering change
- Identify opportunities for engagement with business, consumers and the community through raising the profile of good practice initiatives and providing opportunities to share learning
- Increase the input from environmental health practitioners in promoting dietary improvement by identifying requirements for new tools, new skills, new guidance and the available opportunities to address gaps
- Ensure the provision of effective, high quality education and training for all those working in the food industry, in matters of healthy diet and good nutrition
- Improve the knowledge of a balanced diet and the acquisition of skills to increase consumption in the home through public education, starting within schools

### **Improvements in the sustainability of the food chain**

The CIEH will promote improvements in the sustainability of the food chain by working in partnership with government, members, the food industry, other key stakeholders and communities to:

- Raise awareness of the environmental impacts of food production and the varying carbon footprints of different food choices
- Promote the need to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with food and drink production and live within environmental limits. For example by seeking more ecologically sound solutions such as supporting small farms, eating seasonally and buying locally
- Support the need to eliminate unnecessary food waste to reduce environmental impacts and save money
- Support the need for appropriate packaging to limit environmental impact, while ensuring food safety and quality, alongside promoting improvements in recycling and waste disposal
- Identify and promote good practice
- Support members through the identification of core training and guidance needs and the opportunities to address the identified gaps

### **Equitable access to a secure supply of safe, nutritious and affordable food**

The CIEH will promote equitable access for all to a safe, nutritious, secure and affordable food supply by working in partnership with government, members, the food industry, other key stakeholders and communities to :

- Support the security and resilience of the food chain
- Support and promote the need for cross-sectoral initiatives designed to tackle issues of food poverty and associated health inequalities
- Identify, highlight and seek solutions to barriers to consumption of nutritious and affordable food. For example poor access or lack of cooking skills
- Identify and promote good practice
- Support members through the identification of core training and guidance needs and the opportunities to address the identified gaps