

## **A Sustainable Food Policy. (Food and Land)**

Submission on behalf of Totnes & South Devon and Newton Abbot CLPs. This was developed by members at a policy forum event (22/06/2019) based on knowledge of our constituencies, consideration of evidence, and our reading of the NPF briefing

### **Food Sovereignty Principles pg. 4**

#### **Food is for people.**

There is a real need to minimise food miles alongside ensuring sustainability of farming. Perhaps the party could consider a labelling system for this, alongside labelling the carbon footprint of different foodstuffs according to how they are produced.

Food should be grown to meet people's needs. The growing of crops to feed stock such a beef is not sustainable or green.

#### **The Right to Healthy food**

#### **4. Should we be aspirational and visionary in our approach, or should we be measured and incremental?**

A living income is more important than a 'right to food'. This has serious and far-reaching implications for employment policy, minimum wage policy, and benefit regulations.

Policy relating to the question should be bold, decisive and reflect long term thinking.

#### **6. Should there be a duty to provide food or should the duty be to avoid hunger and malnutrition?**

Clearly it is part of any governments mandate to ensure that food is available to sustain the population and should be closely linked to health policy.

### **Land Pg. 5**

#### **7. Is there a need to review and reform land law and public land management systems in order to underpin a sustainable food system?**

The point was made that since Thatcher came to power there has been a huge privatisation of public land.

*'Since the late 1970s, when the government began what has turned into a long-term land privatisation programme, about half of all public land – 2 million hectares in total, or 10% of Britain's overall land area – has been sold, mainly to private companies.'*

#### **8. Should we establish a Land Commission to conduct a review and make legal recommendations and if yes, what should its remit be?**

Yes – policy and regulation to prevent further this enclosure of public land must be put in place. A Land Commission needs to be set up to investigate and to recommend legislation to

prevent further sell off of public land and even consider compulsory purchase of certain areas of land that are of community value.

The Labour Party should implement a Land Value Tax as soon as it can be legislated for.

#### Land Value Tax

*The value of a piece of land derives from such things as natural fertility, mineral deposits and its position in relation to public utilities, natural harbours, communications and population. Different pieces of land vary enormously in their value. An acre of land in the middle of a town, for example, may be worth many thousands of times as much as an acre of remote moorland. Therefore, a tax on land values is a fair tax, because the person who owns land derives benefit from something which he or she has not made.*

#### **10. What should a sustainable land policy look like? Pg5.**

We need 'A right to Roam,' legislation in England, as already exists in Scotland. This also implies a case for learning from effective structures and legislation in devolved regions.

We discussed whether land of 'unknown' or disputed ownership could be taken into public ownership through a new legal mechanism - similar to how intestate wealth can be acquired by Treasury through probate.

Providing opportunities for young tenant farmers through publicly owned land can be a way to encourage new entrants to the industry and influence farming methods - encouraging mixed farms at the expense of monocultures.

Subsidies to large landowners such as aristocrats, the crown and the church and those who have bought land as an investment should be phased out as soon as possible. Huge land banks held by developers and others should be compulsorily purchased for public benefit. The money saved should be made available to small farmers crofts and small holdings and young farmers especially those in the organic movement through regional and sub regional Green Land Banks with democratically elected local directors.

Over 85% of land and property in England and Wales is now registered with The Land Registry. Much of the land owned by the Crown, the aristocracy, and the Church has not been registered, because it has never been sold, which is one of the main triggers for compulsory registration.

The aim of the Land Registry to register all land by 2030 should be brought forward and they should be given the resources to do this and to police it.

Maintain ban on all GM crops.

Encourage organic growing at all levels. Put in place taxes on fertilisers and pesticides to encourage this.

#### **Food Production and Distribution**

**11.** What are the national and international barriers legal, commercial or administrative that might constrain our development of sustainable, healthy and efficient food systems?

Support sustainable food production and distribution throughout the world, by ensuring fair prices are paid to small farmers in other countries: prevent food being weaponised by allowing land grabs by big corporations and the unregulated free trade in food that causes hardship and shortages in the poorest countries of the world.

### **Work Force Pg 6**

A thriving food industry requires a safe and healthy work environment, free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination. Workers should have the right to secure contracts with a living wage and must be guaranteed fair political and union representation. The UK food industry depends on seasonal workers, but their employment should be governed by the same regulations as in the rest of the industry, especially after Brexit when the UK may no longer be bound by EU directives on this issue.

15. More secure working conditions unionised where necessary.

17. Refer to Land section.

19. Investigate and experiment with new ways of growing food e.g. hydroponics vertical growing especially in cities and town growing underground with LED lighting etc.

### **Other issues**

A tax on meat production was suggested but not agreed by all.

Food miles should be a concern for any government committed to carbon reduction, especially food brought in by air freight. But air miles need to be considered as part of the overall carbon footprint. For example, research by Riverford and Exeter University locally to us found that it is more carbon efficient to grow tomatoes in Spain and transport them to the UK than to grow them using heat in the UK.