

Group discussion outcomes at Central Coast Regional Forum

Access to healthy food

- Localise food growth, production and retail
- Council Information
 - Council needs to put systems in place – proximity, distribution, price
 - Make local food production an equal priority with housing development
 - Calculate food production areas necessary to sustain the population
 - Raise awareness by boosting communication of information for education of community
 - Create an effective honest system – not cheap produce from out of area posing as local produce
- Collection of out of date foods from supermarkets to local processing
 - Volunteers to be used to remove at the supermarket from packaging for composting.
Treat packaging separately
- Labeling of fresh produce grown locally as “grown here” versus grown elsewhere
- Change attitude of consumers from cheap production to sustainable production
- Local produce store and food cooperatives in each town
- Neighborhoods as co-producers. Bartering with produce at local cooperative
- Local/state/federal incentives to protect small farm producers
- Productive verges – growing fruit and vegetables in community areas

Planning for healthy food supplies

- Question the use of chemicals and treatment such as irradiation or label irradiated foods
- Food segment in garden competitions
- School gardens expanded to education for whole community
- All schools need to grow food – agriculture/design and technology/home economics
- No one should leave secondary schools without basic food preparation skills from raw produce
- Students don't need to learn how to use a packet mix
- Legislate for only healthy food to be served in school canteens
- Strongly advise parents of primary school age what to put in lunch boxes
- Promote respect and guardianship for the land as it provides for and sustains us
- No fast food outlets close to schools
- Organisational management of site, water and waste – homes, schools and corporations
- Big retail businesses need to be accountable for taking business away from local producers and ruining agricultural land and the environment – subsidise local farmers and include their produce if possible.
- Retail profits to the marketing of local produce with labeling “From Here”
- Research to influence policy
- Non-acceptance of the status quo

- Public land plant food production – nuts, indigenous foods
- Educate for critical food choice consumers – engaged and informed
- Scheme for funding gardeners to maintain food-producing gardens (hired muscle)
- Legislate treatment of fresh food disposal to avoid waste – redirection to food processing or composting. Oz Harvest needed on the Central Coast
- Empower people in the community who want to make a difference.
- Support smaller community-minded organizations and initiatives
- Take label of “healthy food” aisle in supermarkets
- Support local farmers and producers
- Growers’ markets for local growers and local produce – not for people who purchase in Sydney markets as an opportunity to make money off cheap produce.
- Eco-city farming –closed system
- Smart distribution as opposed to excessive food miles
- Lobby local MP’s with a list of strategies and actions
- Provide local cooking school for those who do not know how to prepare meals from raw produce – Wyong Memorial Hall has great facilities and rarely used
- Zoning of land for ‘food land’ – planning for food production zones – reduce food miles
- Restrictions on the proliferation of fast food outlets and supermarkets
- Reduce carbon emissions trading to 350ppm
- Reduce the excessive production of food that leads to waste or plan to process excess to avoid waste

Sustainable Agriculture

- Sustainable agriculture is everyone’s responsibility
- Form consumer producers alliance
- Whole system planning
- Re-establishment of community partnerships between consumer and producer
 - A future of bioregional networked communities, grassroots based and grounded in permaculture design
 - Fight the hold that capitalist thinking has over unsustainable thinking and world views
- Increase education and awareness raising
- Free permaculture classes in the community encouraging many students – demonstrating what works
 - Small farms
 - Using all food resources from local growers
- Reskilling – promote careers in food farming in schools, TAFE and university
 - Scholarships
 - Start up grants
 - Support farmers to apprentice young farmers
 - Promote success stories to inspire others

- Act on concern for loss of farming/food growing land
 - Keep farmers farming with access to affordable skilled labour
 - Community training as farmers volunteers or work for the dole
 - Be concerned for the physical, social, emotional and economic health of farmers
 - Government promotion of the valued work of the food grower
- No farmers, no farms, no food! Work on raising the status and initiatives for our food producers
- Community veggie gardens as a means of educating and skilling

Food Safety and Health

- No Genetically modified or genetically engineered food
- Keep food production out of the hands of companies like Monsanto!
- Read the Omnivore's dilemma by Michael Pollan
- No chemicals to be used in food production
- Combat dishonesty and unethical behavior among food growers and retailers – even among 'organic' growers
- Evidence of current system failing – mad cow, bird flu, swine flu – changes need to made
- Self regulation is not effective among companies that are only interested in the \$ bottom line
- Need specific code of conduct - more honest labelling
- Food safety education in schools must be hands on – grow it, cook it, eat it, love it.
- Localised food supply easier to trace and avoid chemical contamination - stop food imports
- Health of the population should be at the forefront of food production not \$ value
- Takeaway food may need warning packaging – only recommended as occasional food.
- Hospital food should be an example of what keeps you healthy – not what is convenient for mass production. Take food preparation back to fresh food in hospitals
- Maintain hygiene and quality checks on hospital food
- Does homogenization impact on the goodness of milk?
- Eliminate high energy, high caffeine sugary drinks eg Red Bull or
- Stop accelerated growth in poultry industry
- An educated consumer will make more critical healthy choices if there are more healthy options and less highly processed high fat sugary foods.
- Ban advertising of foods high in fat and sugar and low in nutritional value
- The government needs to promote healthy food choices with 'cool' image makers