

Refresh of the Region's Sustainable Farming & Food Action Plan

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18th March 2009

The Need for a Refresh

The market position of agriculture changed markedly from 2006-08

Series of meetings with regional businesses, public bodies, politicians and researchers in 2008 signalled the need for a new set of actions

The refreshed action plan responds to this

Demand – macro level

- The Global Nature of Demand for food, feed, fuel, renewable materials has changed particularly since spring 2007 – some prices doubled & then halved
- Population will increase to 9.5bn by 2050 (World Bank) +50%
- Affluence increasing - developing World middle class will grow from 350m in 2000 to 2.1bn by 2030 – 6 fold increase in those able to buy consumer goods, buy cars, beyond basic housing etc.
- Most of increase in ‘newly wealthy’ BRIC countries, and population growth (absolute) largest in India
- Big increase in the global demand for all agricultural products (food, feed, fuel, renewable materials) – doubling the demand by 2050
- Realising this will require new investment, technical & management skills, and enhanced R&D effort

Environmental Constraints

But as well as delivering more, we have to address:

- Climate change – both responding to the impacts & helping to address the causes – agriculture uniquely placed to sequester carbon in the soil
- Calls for ‘more environment’ i.e. wildlife, habitats
- Calls for less externalities e.g. pollution, waste, CO2 emissions, methane, NOx, smell, dust - agriculture is a major global polluter
- To achieve this whilst also increasing production demands much more sophisticated solutions and investment in new processes

Health

But the changes which are coming are not just about absolute demand or living within environmental constraints:

- Health is increasing in significance as populations age
- Wellbeing is growing in importance & a concern about diets
 - food supply in the developing World (1bn chronically hungry '08)
 - obesity in the West
- Food can be enriched to make it healthier –the 'functional' food market predicted to be \$175bn globally by 2012 (Euromonitor '09)
- This requires new science to be applied & managers to understand & exploit the markets which will emerge

Action Plan 2009-2012 – 6 core areas

R&D

Re-examine public sector R & D to help the sector deliver its potential both economically & environmentally, & to increase knowledge transfer from researchers to the business community

- Knowledge transfer projects for food production & environmental sustainability

Skills

Increase the recruitment of new people into the sector & develop the skills of the existing workforce & business owners

- Workforce skills
- Skills infrastructure
- Engaging school and College students
- Entrepreneur skills support

Commercial Development & investment

Stimulate commercial investment in the sector using RDPE & other funding streams as appropriate

- Commodity food supply chain development
- Non Food & Innovative Crops
- Local Food & the London Market
- NHS, food & diet
- Game market
- Woodfuel
- Transport & logistics
- Fallen stock
- Abattoir infrastructure

Business support & advice

Ensure businesses can access high quality advice & guidance on business & environmental issues

- Business resource efficiency (water, energy, waste)
- Business risk management
- International trade
- Animal health

Environmental sustainability

Deliver enhanced environmental sustainability by encouraging & supporting more businesses to manage their operations in ways which benefit the landscape, biodiversity or waste management, & which help address climate change

- Stewardship & woodland management
- Grazing of sensitive landscapes
- Investment in water, energy & waste projects
- Carbon management
- Soil management
- Coastal management

Communications & Public Relations

Ensure the agri-food sector identifies & communicates a clear vision for the sector

- Refocused R&D support
- Refocused workforce development support
- Balanced policy agenda - Production & Environment
- Supportive business environment
- Reconnection

Next steps

The new Action Plan is due to be adopted by the Sustainable Farming & Food group on 24th April

Any comments are welcome before then to:

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