

Breakout Session 3

Food Systems under pressure: getting to equitable and sustainable in East Anglia and Kent

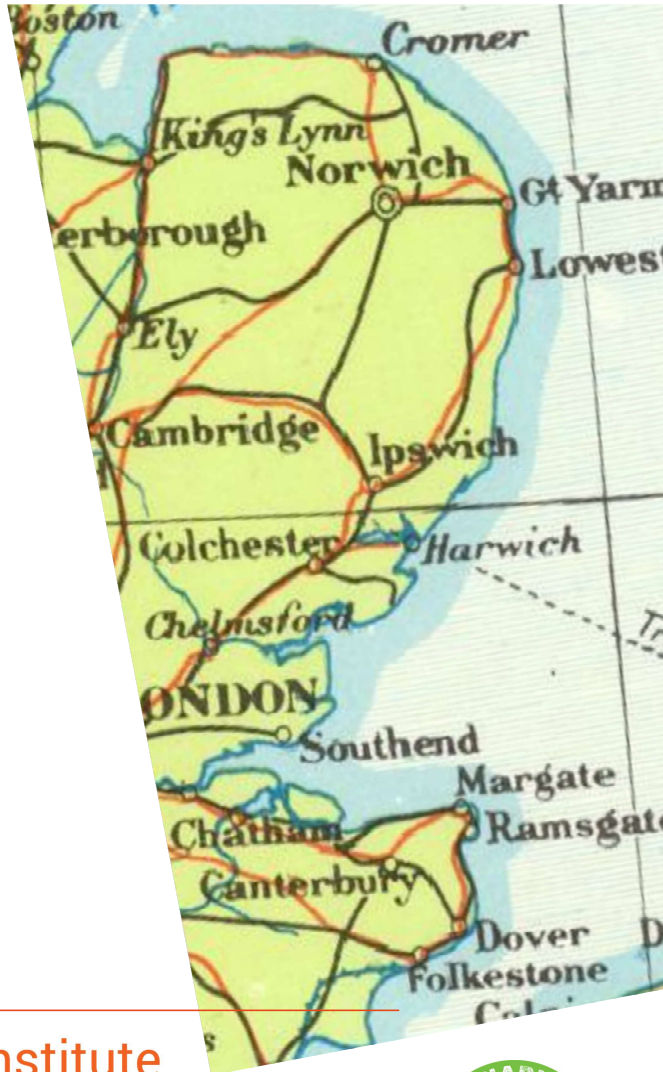
20 September 11.45am-1.00pm

Organisers:

Natasha Grist, Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development

Floortje Hoette, Produced in Kent

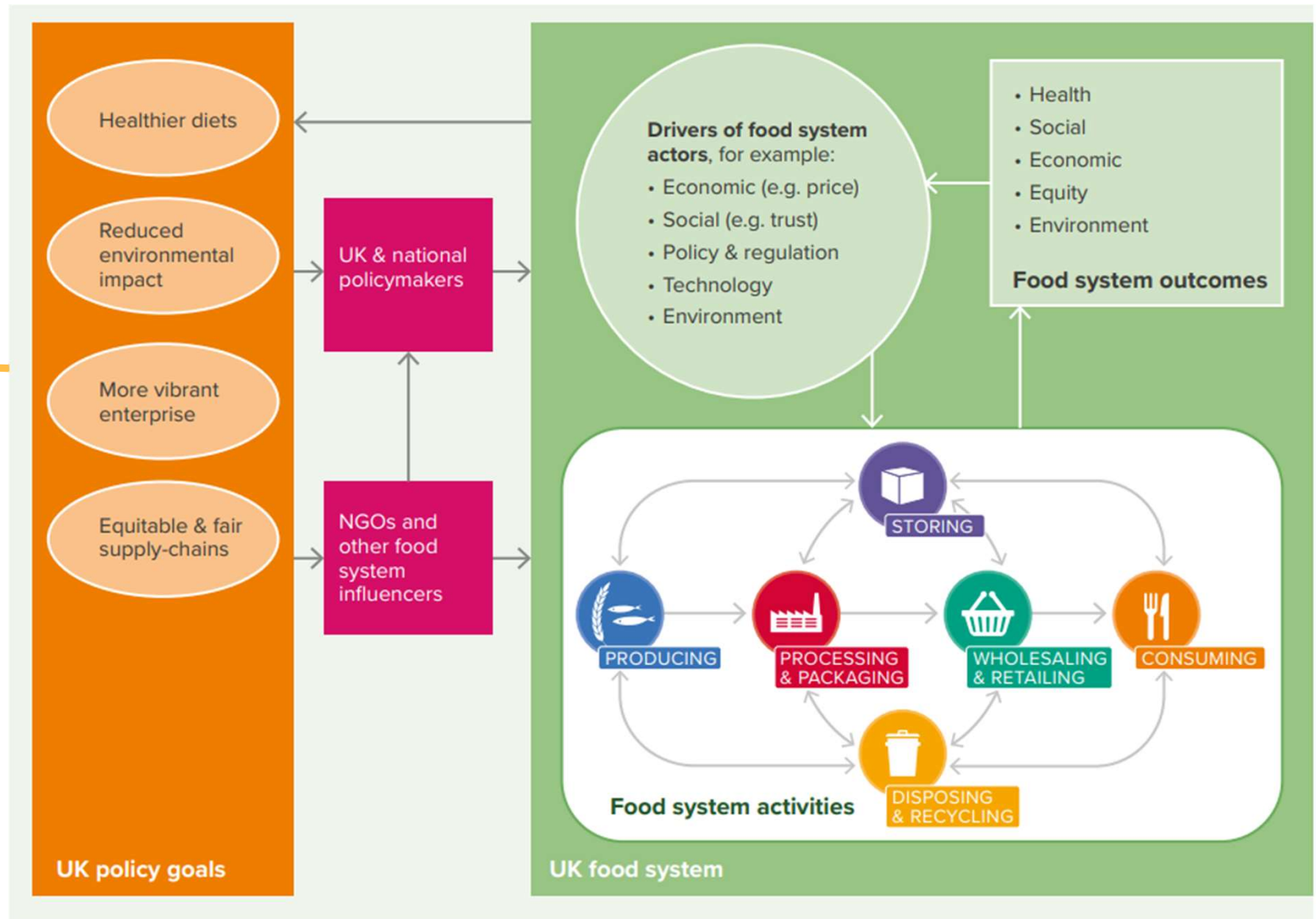
Sarah Tetley, Eastern ARC officer (technical support)



Norwich Institute Sustainable Development

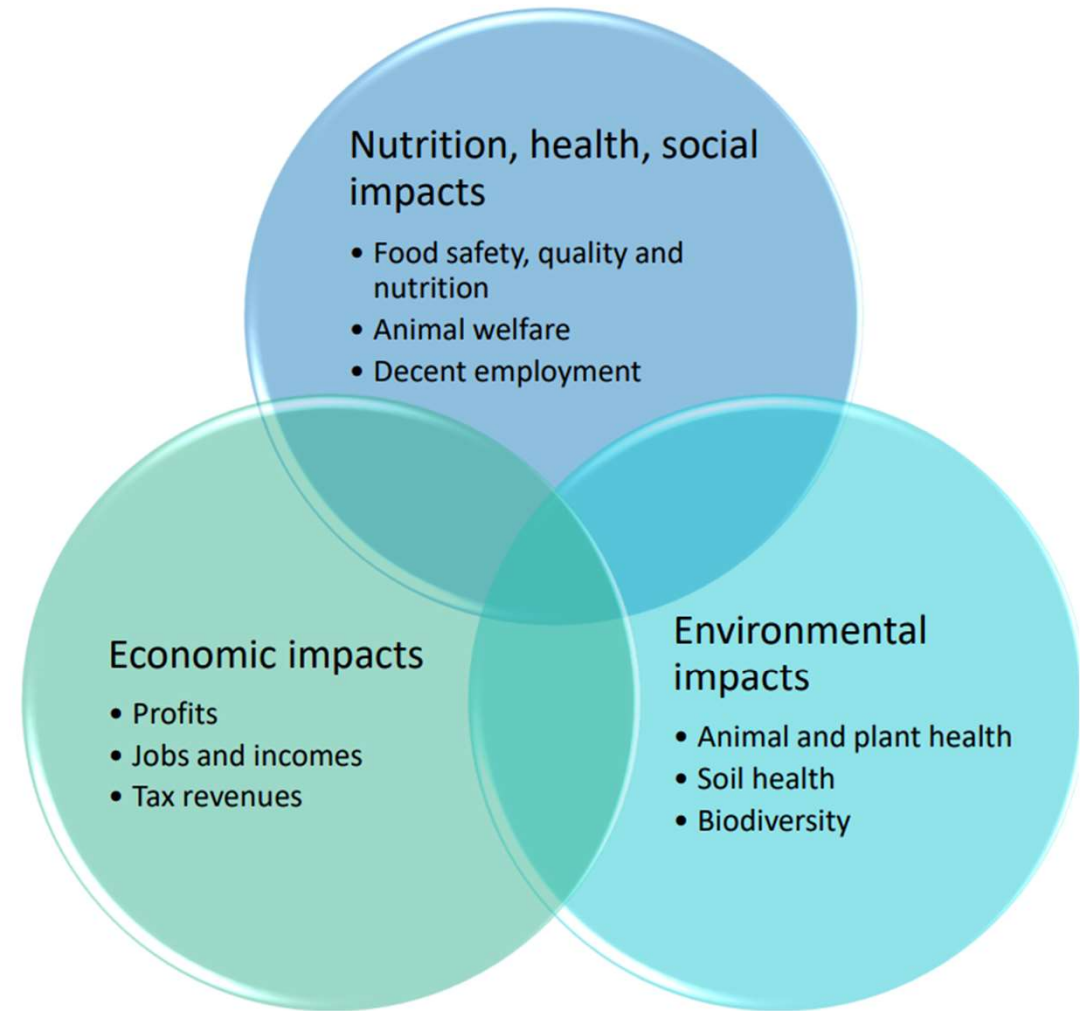


Simplified UK food system



Source: Hasnain et al (2020) Mapping the UK Food System – UKRI Transforming Food Systems Programme

A sustainable food system **delivers food security and nutrition** for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generation *is not compromised*.



Snapshot East Anglia and Kent

Eastern England

- 34,000 employed in food
- 57% of UK local vegetables
- Nearly 1/3 UK's arable crops
- Major in logistics and processing
- Newish Food Enterprise Zones
- Agrifood research hubs
- Agrifood tech £3.1bn in 2022
- Net Zero 'leadership'

New Anglia LEP (2022)

Kent

- 16,000 employed in food
- Major cereal, fruit and vegetable production, livestock grazing
- 9.6% all businesses are food/drink production
- But most of these businesses are farming (87%)
- Decline in production last few years

Kent County Council (2022)



“UK supermarkets can be ‘forces for good’, focusing on shorter supply chains and fairer prices to suppliers”

James Smith



“UK supermarkets can be ‘forces for good’, focusing on shorter supply chains and fairer prices to suppliers”

thoughts and questions

“Buying local will never catch on unless we find ways to make local, sustainable product more affordable”

Floortje Hoette





What makes local sustainable product more 'expensive'?

- Sustainable growing practices/better animal welfare/artisan food production methods
- Size business and (in)ability to scale
- Mark-up wholesale/retail (greed-flation?)
- Perception?



WHAT ARE WE TOLD BY THE MEDIA/ONLINE



WHAT ABOUT VALUE?



HAVE WE GROWN TOO USED TO CHEAP FOOD?



What makes local sustainable product more 'expensive'?

...but, like for like, local products can be more affordable

(Prices 18 Sept 2023)

local veg box

Goodery

1 Add to cart
Organic Free Range Eggs (Box of 6)
Arthur's Organics
£2.60

national supermarket



Tesco Organic Tesco Mixed Size Organic Eggs
6 Pack
Fresh

£2.90

national veg box



Organic Free Range Eggs, Stonegate (6 medium)

£3.80
Abel & Cole

local veg coop







NORWICH FARMSHARE
£2.60 ea
6 Organic Maple Farm Eggs
Maple Farm

How do UK food prices compare to

.....
 BBC News 9 June 2023

Price in supermarkets and hypermarkets in March 2023

more expensive  cheaper

						
Nappies	£5.57	£8.03	£6.32	£8.06	£9.70	£12.43
Frozen Pizza	£1.92	£2.18	£2.51	£2.75	£2.62	£2.83
Rice	£1.26	£1.65	£1.57	£2.21	£1.26	£1.93
Canned Fish	£1.62	£1.46	£1.84	£3.15	£2.51	£2.05
Eggs	£1.90	£2.14	£2.53	£1.72	£1.98	£2.39
Cooking Oil	£3.52	£3.09	£3.99	£3.97	£4.75	£4.12
Frozen Veg	£1.47	£1.52	£1.26	£1.95	£1.27	£1.91
Pasta	£1.09	£1.29	£1.36	£0.96	£1.04	£1.25
Breads	£1.22	£1.29	£1.13	£1.16	£1.35	£1.38
Dish Detergent	£2.31	£1.98	£2.53	£2.24	£2.42	£2.66
Yogurt	£1.35	£0.78	£1.38	£1.20	£1.43	£1.94

Source: Citrus

BBBC



How can we convince public to buy local & sustainable

1. EDUCATION

- **COST:** Cheap food & the cost-of-living crisis
- **VALUE:** Economic, environmental, social, health
- **COOKING:** school curriculum, community initiatives
- **WALK:** Don't just talk the talk – if you can, WALK

Long game – difficult to change customer behaviour

2. IMPROVE ACCESS

- Retail pop-ups – trade in high footfall areas
- Food Hubs – shorter supply chain, town location
- Shared production space – help SMEs scale up

Purpose driven rather than profit-driven

“Buying local will never catch on unless we find ways to make local, sustainable product more affordable”

Alex Larter



COST OF LIVING CRISIS



challenge for small & micro businesses to ensure margin if reducing pricing



increasing production is not always the solution



finding places to sell the produce becomes harder - delisting and closures

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WILL COME AFTER THE BOTTOM LINE



businesses will first look to sustain their profit margin before thinking net-zero



local supply chains need support to ensure this is feasible: not on manufacturers



everything is geared towards bulk in the industry: pricing out the local producers



support from public sector & universities is geared towards bigger SMEs: we have a blind spot



SOLUTIONS TO AFFORDABLE LOCAL PRODUCTS



the Rochdale Pioneers and the Coop Model:
happened in a period such as this one



iTeams at UEA lead to Ankosé - a non-profit
business looking to tackle this issue inspired
by the Coop Model



there is an opportunity for local wholesalers to
become suppliers of primary ingredients at lower
costs



lack of data to support this assumption
about affordability: more research needed



we can work with micro producers to help
streamline their production processes at
a grassroots level



could there be space for a new
model of a wholesale cooperative to
ensure affordable local supplies?



“Buying local will never catch on unless we find ways to make local, sustainable product more affordable”

thoughts and questions

wider discussion of equity and sustainability
of food system

thoughts and questions
research gaps
engagement needed

Further areas of research – initial ideas

- **Critical analysis of UK food systems conceptual frameworks** understanding tradeoffs in sustainabilities, stakeholder allies, hidden /private data and systemic bottlenecks and opportunities in our regions
- **Develop/refine and test measures of sustainability** that can be applied at **our regional level in the UK** (interdisciplinary env science, economics, sociology and health disciplines)
- **Generate BASIC DATA** - regional level data to provide evidence to justify actions and prioritisation of sustainability within future planning
- **Test hypotheses/ narratives with robust independent evidence gathering**
 - e.g. Is the local independent food and drink sector a driver of sustainable practices?
- **Understand how to influence consumer and stakeholder behaviour in our regions -e.g.**
 - What cultural narratives are prevalent, how powerful are they, and how should we engage in changing these?
 - How do we engage on environmental and social sustainability given cost of living crisis?
 - How can we harness social media positively to support change going forward?
- **Foster co-learning across food systems stakeholders in Eastern ARC**

thank you all

this was breakout session 3 -

Food Systems under pressure:
getting to equitable and sustainable
in East Anglia and Kent

to follow up with research ideas and engagement, please contact Natasha Grist - n.grist@uea.ac.uk



Further slide bits and pieces

References

- Corinna Hawkes FAO presentation 2023 (from system described in HLPE 2017)
- https://www.unnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Hawkes_HUB%20Virtual%20workshop%20for%20RCs%20and%20UNCTs_Day1.pdf
- Drewnowski et al (2020) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2475299122120275#bib8>
- Hasnain, S., Ingram, J. and Zurek, M. 2020. Mapping the UK Food System – a report for the UKRI Transforming UK Food Systems Programme. Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford. ISBN 978-1-874370-81-9
- <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Agri-food-in-Eastern-England-investment-opportunity-Winter-2021-LR-2.pdf>
- <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fnewanglia.co.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2022%2F01%2FFINAL-Norfolk-Suffolk-Economic-Strategy-2022-Evidence-Base.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>
- Juskaite and Hung (2023) Equity and Food Systems narratives
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2023.1127562/full>

• Images

- **Slide 1:** Image © Eastern ARC 2022 The Importance of Place – Eastern Arc and levelling up <https://easternarc.ac.uk/news/the-importance-of-place-new-booklet-published/>