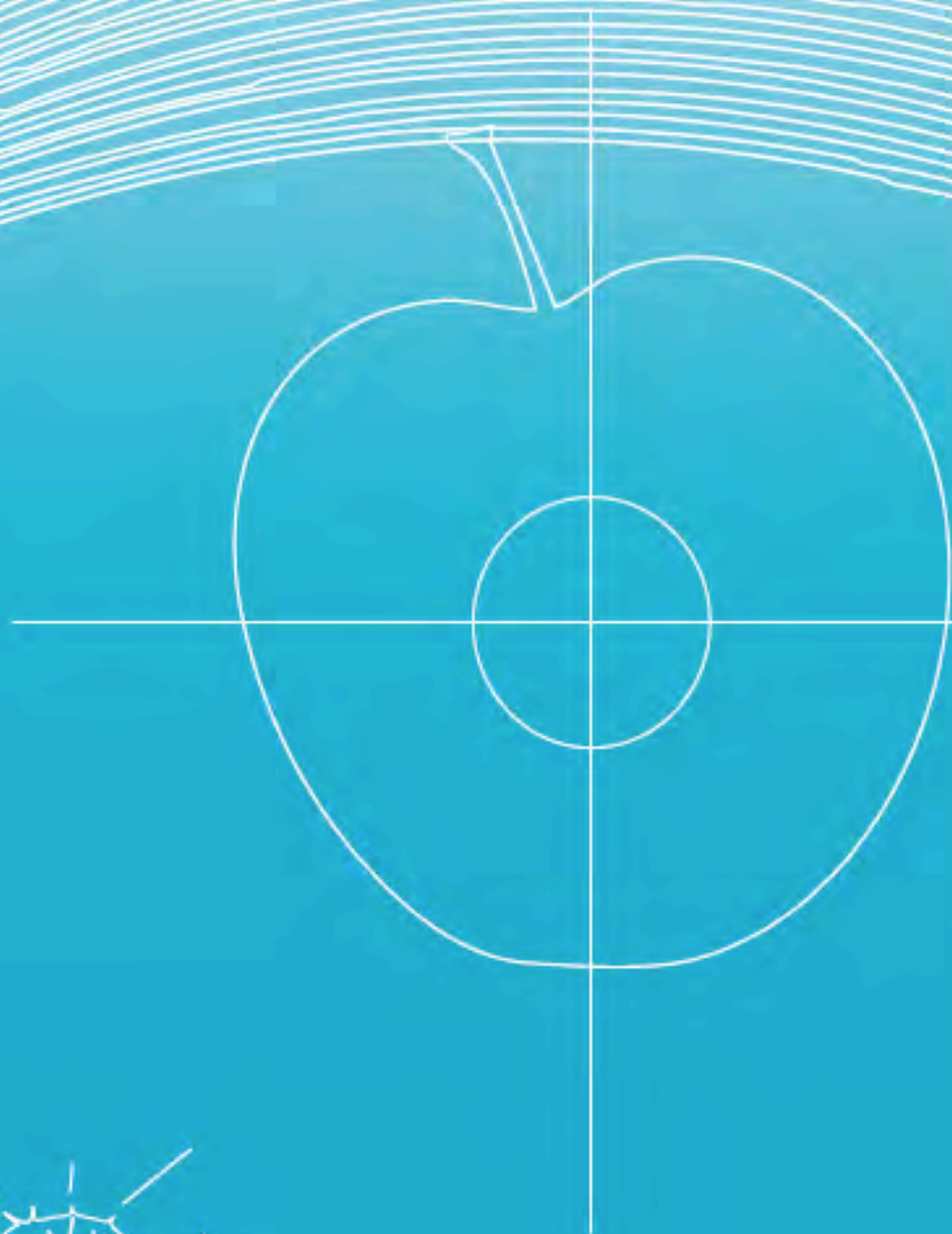


Food Ethics Council
Annual Review 2006 | 07



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Chair's introduction

In the past year people's choice of food has grown more political than ever. The battleground of ideas has stretched from obesity to climate change. In the UK, government, industry and NGOs have wrangled over whether colour-coded labels help people to eat healthily. Supermarkets have been urged to make choices responsibly on behalf of their customers. Eco-labelling with a product's carbon footprint has come a step closer. Meanwhile, the effect on producers in poorer countries of cutting back our food miles has come under intense scrutiny, whether in relation to air-freighted vegetables or reforms of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy.

Two themes crop up across the board. The first, in the policy jargon, is about changing people's behaviour – in other words, what can government and industry do to make us all leaner and greener? The second is choice – how far should they go and what should be left up to all of us to sort out by ourselves?

These questions lie at the heart of the Food Ethics Council's unique remit to promote wise decision-making that leads to better food and farming, and I am very proud of how our members and staff have helped policy makers, businesses and civil society to make sense of their responsibilities over the past year. The organisation has challenged senior health officials over their emphasis on people's individual responsibilities to promote public health. We have pressed for a Common Agricultural Policy that takes Europe's international footprint seriously. We have also launched a timely project on road pricing, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which explores how far charging road users could promote more sustainable supply chains.

Our challenge in 2007/08 is to create a solid base from which we can meet the growing demand from policy makers, industry and NGOs for clear analysis of ethical issues around food and farming, for tools to help make good decisions about those issues, and for space in which to grapple with them through dialogue and deliberation.

Helen Browning OBE



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The Food Ethics Council challenges government, business and society to make wise choices that lead to better food and farming. Uniquely, we focus on how choices are made and we champion decisions that are:

Principled – aiming to benefit people, animals and the planet, and to treat each fairly and with dignity.

Informed – based on sound knowledge and diverse experience, but ready for surprises.

Inclusive – involving and answerable to the people they affect.

What we do

We work as an independent think tank and advisory body, challenging government, business and the public on ethical issues and championing better decision-making. Our members lead this work in a voluntary capacity and our staff support them through research, analysis and advocacy. We publish reports and a magazine, we organise deliberative workshops and events, and we develop tools for ethical decision-making. We extend our reach by working with others, including public bodies, companies, campaign groups and research institutes.

Who we are

We are a charity and our work is not for profit. We are not affiliated to any political party or religious organisation. Our sixteen council members – all leaders in relevant fields – are appointed as individuals. They bring a broad range of expertise to our work, from academic research through to practical knowledge of farming, business and policy.

What we work on

We focus on how choices are made about difficult problems and emerging controversies. Our work has spanned genetically modified foods, drug use in farm animals, public involvement in science, functional foods, gene-tailored diets, patents, poverty, farm subsidies and food transport. Our work starts in the UK but its scope is global.

Who funds us

Support from foundations and individuals makes our work possible. We also fund our work by selling publications, organising events and undertaking research. We only accept funding that does not compromise our independence. The organisation was founded in 1998 with support from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Farm and Food Society.



An ethical approach

We want a better, fairer food system – one where it is easy to eat well and chronic hunger is a distant memory worldwide, where farmers and food producers can make a decent living, where animals are treated humanely, and which respects the environment. But then, who doesn't? The tricky part is getting there. The Food Ethics Council is unique for focusing on how decisions are made about food and farming, and who makes them. By challenging government, business and society to improve decision-making, we help people make choices that lead towards a more just and sustainable future.

We champion decision-making that is:

Principled – aiming to **benefit** people, animals and the planet, and treat each fairly and with **dignity**. Ethical principles like **justice** underpin how, as a society, we tell right from wrong. Our ethical tools use such principles to help decision-makers think through the effects of their choices more fully, asking who benefits, spotting win-wins and making trade-offs fairly.

Informed – based on sound **knowledge** and diverse experience, but ready for **surprises**. Our research and **analysis** spells out and explores the big questions behind difficult problems and emerging controversies in food and farming. We put our research publications through extended peer review by experts and stakeholders on our Council and beyond.

Inclusive – involving and **answerable** to the people it affects. We advocate **transparent** policy processes that are open to public scrutiny. Our workshops and events create a space for **deliberation** and promote wider public involvement in decisions by government and businesses.

The Ethical Matrix – a tool developed by council members – has been used by experts, policy makers, schools and the public to weigh up the pros and cons of innovations such as functional foods that are marketed with health claims.

For details and **examples** see www.foodethicscouncil.org/ourwork/tools, www.ethicaltools.info, www.ethicalmatrix.net, www.bbsrc.ac.uk/life/cleanup/issues.html

Research in food and farming shapes innovations – novel ingredients, genetically modified plants and animal breeds, for example – that affect the choices available to people. Our *Just Knowledge?* report showed how research and innovation could be more accountable to citizens and more 'future proof'.

"The Food Ethics Council's *Just Knowledge?* report made us think much more deeply about how to run an accountable scientific programme."

Professor Philip Lowe OBE, Director, UK's Rural Economy and Land Use research programme

Our *Getting Personal* report showed that trends in the industry and nutritional science towards single-serve foods, health-focused marketing and genetically 'personalised' dietary advice did not live up to their claims to be good for public health. This work has been widely cited and sparked an episode of the BBC Food Programme. We have also challenged regulators to improve public access to information about drugs used on farm animals and advised them how to make their decision-making more transparent. Our deliberative workshops on *Power in the Food System* helped policy-makers, businesses and campaigners identify new ways to make the food system more answerable to the public.

"The Food Ethics Council is an increasingly important voice in food policy. It brings an **intelligent, well-considered** and **highly principled** approach to policy deliberations, at a time when food is being understood as a crucial way for delivering on society's ethical and environmental aspirations. The Food Ethics Council's *Getting Personal* report, for example, cogently argued that government should be hands-on in promoting public health – offering people the 'choice' to be unhealthy doesn't empower them."

Kath Dalmeny, Deputy Coordinator of Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming



Highlights of 2006/07

This was the year that UK regulators reviewed junk food ads and gave some foods the red light, that the Doha trade round collapsed and ten years slipped by since the World Food Summit, that Britain's biggest retailer unveiled a community plan and the Competition Commission launched a further inquiry into supermarkets, and that the Stern Report put a price on climate change and farm subsidy chaos put Defra in the red.

The Food Ethics Council contributed to policy development and public debate on these issues and more. We responded to government consultations on **junk food** advertising, **supermarket power**, **veterinary drugs** and **science**, with comments taken up by policy makers and covered in the national press. We brought debate on ethical issues to new audiences through joint events with the **UK Social Investment Forum**, the **Institute for Public Policy Research**, the **Royal Society of Arts** and the **City of Bradford**. We launched a magazine called *Food Ethics*, to which **key government** departments, **leading journalists** and **major companies** already subscribe. The first year of the magazine featured **50 articles**, stimulating debate on subjects including **trade rules**, **secrecy**, **hunger**, **social marketing**, **food poverty**, **fish farms**, **biofuels** and **nutrigenomics**.

Our main projects focused on three of the most difficult challenges facing policy makers in food and farming over the next decade.

Obesity

Who chooses how well people eat?

Faced with a massive burden of diet-related disease, governments, food companies and scientists are looking for ways to change people's eating habits on an epic scale. Their answer, in public health messages, in food marketing and through genetically-targeting nutritional advice, is to stress people's personal responsibilities to choose a healthy diet. In 2005, we reported that this trend towards 'personalised nutrition' not only failed public health and social justice, but hid how far people's food choices are actually shaped by government and companies. In May 2006, we held a roundtable to explore the how businesses and government could take a lead on healthy eating while treating people with dignity. The meeting was opened by Dame Deirdre Hutton, Chair of the Food Standards Agency, and brought together senior officials from the Department of Health, leading researchers and consumer groups. It concluded that the trend towards 'personalised nutrition' could undermine population approaches to public health.

Food miles

Could road pricing shrink our food footprints?

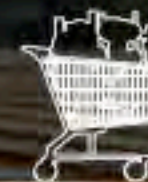
Transport is an important source of greenhouse gas emissions and food accounts for a quarter of the miles trucks travel in the UK. Road pricing, whereby drivers are charged according to their use of roads, could help to reduce this. Yet, depending on the detail, it could equally do the opposite. As road pricing is a central plank of UK transport policy it is important to find out what factors tip it one way or another, and to understand the knock-on effects of road pricing for the environment

and for people's daily lives. In September 2006, we began an 18-month project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which is one of the first attempts to do this. We aim to harness any potential of road pricing to promote sustainable food systems by ensuring that effects on food distribution are fully considered in transport policy. In the first three months of the project we met a wide range of stakeholders, held an expert workshop with the Royal Society of Arts and published a paper setting out how road pricing could affect our food system.

Europe

Is a leaner CAP better for people and planet?

Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is expensive and controversial: it costs EU citizens 100 billion per year; it makes it harder for people in poor countries to earn a living from farming; and, perversely, it supports some practices that harm the environment and public health. Reforms in 2003 began to address some of these problems and further change is expected in 2008-9, with the UK government pressing for a leaner, meaner CAP where subsidies and tariffs have been slashed. Our work on the CAP challenges UK negotiators to develop a reform agenda that directly supports its commitment to promote sustainable development in the UK and wherever else our food is produced. This means tackling tricky issues, such as how to improve environmental standards without exporting problems we are trying to solve. Our paper setting out these challenges was welcomed by Jonathon Porritt, Chair of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, and by Sir Donald Curry, government's senior advisor on farming.



Plans for 2007/08

In 2007/08 we will strengthen our work to promote wise decision-making. We will:

Maximise our impact by focusing on 'bottlenecks' in the food system, where resources are subject to conflict and decisions rest in relatively few hands. To achieve this we will begin new projects on **water scarcity, innovation policy** and **supermarket investment**, as well as continuing work on road pricing and the CAP.

Reach a growing audience and work more to promote ethics in business. We will develop *Food Ethics* into a **bigger, better magazine** that is essential reading for food sector decision-makers in government and business. We will launch events for business people that promote **insight through dialogue** on key issues with their colleagues, competitors, stakeholders and experts.

Support from foundations and individuals will make this work possible. We need to build a strong funding base in 2007/08 to support work we have planned. Our target is to raise £45,000 to cover staff costs and overheads for a new Research Fellow to lead our work on water scarcity and innovation policy. Please contact Dr Tom MacMillan (Executive Director) for further details.

"cutting-edge analysis that prompts real debate"

Zac Goldsmith, editor of *The Ecologist*



Water scarcity

Half the world may live in water-stressed areas by 2025 and people will feel the effects sharply through the food system, since farming uses more water than any other activity. Yet it is often difficult to reduce water use without causing other environmental or social problems. Working with governments, businesses and civil society, we will explore who is responsible for tackling water scarcity and help them to address the ethical challenges it presents.

Innovation policy

Our economy sells problems and solutions – even the same firm may sell junk foods and obesity drugs, for example. But while some new products may cause harm, requiring yet more new products to provide solutions, some innovations can actually prevent problems such as ill-health. Building on our *Just Knowledge?* and *TRIPS with Everything* reports, we will identify key features of a precautionary innovation policy that promotes resilience, diversity and the provision of public goods.

Investment in retail

Supermarkets are vying to look green, fair and healthy. This is welcome, but some of the challenges facing supermarkets go to the heart of their business model. Are the major supermarkets' large market shares and their centralised, long-distance distribution systems socially, environmentally and economically sustainable? We will work with investors to promote responsible restructuring of the food retail sector.

Bigger, better magazine

In 2006 we launched *Food Ethics* – a magazine that challenges accepted opinion and sparks fruitful debate about key issues in food and farming. Confirmed contributors for 2007 include Felicity Lawrence (the *Guardian*), Zad Padda (Ethical First), Jez Lewis (co-writer of the film *Ghosts*), Lord Rooker (UK Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food), Peter Ainsworth MP (Conservative Shadow Environment Minister), Chris Kaufman (T&G Union), Giles Coren (the *Times*), Carlo Petrini (Slow Food) and Flavio Valente (FIAN International).

Insight through dialogue

We will launch a new forum and hold a major conference to help food businesses understand and act on ethical issues. As companies increasingly compete on health and the environment, these events will help leading innovators within the sector understand key challenges in depth through dialogue and deliberation.



Accounts

Our income and expenditure both increased in 2006-7 compared with the previous year. Our total income was £75,030 and we spent £75,504. Less than four percent of our spending went towards governance costs, with all the remainder directly supporting our charitable activities.

While we continue to depend on support from charitable foundations, we diversified our income, increasing earnings from subscriptions, fees and report sales to spend on our work. We aim to continue this trend.

INCOME	2007 Total £	2006 Total £	Project Funds	2007 £
From generated funds (project funds, interest and donations)	66,012	46,533	Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	40,000
From charitable activities (subscriptions, fees and report sales)	9,018	2,497	Allen Lane Foundation	5,000
Total income	75,030	49,030	Esmée Fairburn Foundation	63,125
EXPENDITURE	2007 Total £	2006 Total £	E C Graham Cumbrian Charitable Settlement	1,000
Charitable activities (e.g. staff, office and activity costs)	72,911	65,360	Less:	109,125
Governance (accountancy and trustees' expenses)	2,593	1,937	Deferred until next year	(44,094)
Total expenditure	75,504	67,297	TOTAL	65,031
BALANCE	2007 Total £	2006 Total £		
Brought forward from previous year	7,040	25,307		
Carried forward to next year	6,566	7,040		

People

Members of the Food Ethics Council

Helen Browning OBE (Chair): Organic farmer; Food and Farming Director, Soil Association.

Prof Ruth Chadwick: Director, ESRC Centre for the Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics.

Dr Charlie Clutterbuck: Director, Environmental Practice @ Work.

David Croft: Director of Conformance and Sustainability, Cadbury Schweppes plc.

Dr Elizabeth Dowler (Trustee): Reader in Food and Social Policy, University of Warwick; Registered Public Health Nutritionist.

Julia Hailes MBE: Freelance writer and consultant.

Jeanette Longfield MBE: Coordinator, Sustain – the alliance for better food and farming.

Dr Peter Lund (Trustee): Senior Lecturer, School of Biological Sciences, University of Birmingham.

Prof Ben Mepham: University of Nottingham; University of Lincoln.

Prof Kevin Morgan: Director, Regeneration Institute, Cardiff University.

Dr Kate Rawles: Freelance consultant and environmental philosopher.

Prof Christopher Ritson: Professor of Agricultural Marketing, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Prof Doris Schroeder: Professor of Moral Philosophy and Head, Centre for Professional Ethics, University of Central Lancashire.

Geoff Tansey (Trustee): Joseph Rowntree Visionary for a Just and Peaceful World.

Colin Tudge (Trustee): Freelance writer and broadcaster.

John Verrall (Trustee): Pharmaceutical chemist.

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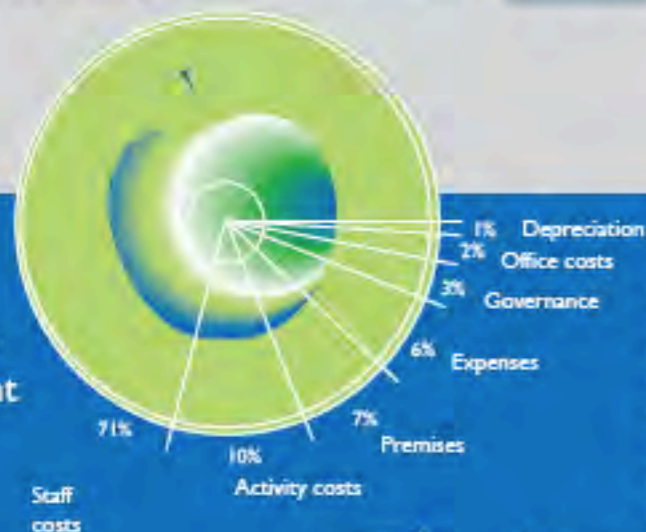
Volunteers

We are very grateful to the following interns and volunteers for working with us in 2006/07.

Tomek Golebiewski
Dr Jamie Lorimer
Cynthia Marin-Jiménez
Mike Owen

Danny Sherwood
Ben Wilson
Tony Winders

Where the money went



The financial information on this page does not form part of the statutory accounts for the year ended 4 January 2007, but has been extracted from these and summarised to show the income and expenditure for the 2007 and 2006 years respectively. The statutory accounts were externally examined by our accountants and have been given an Accountants Report. A full copy is available on our website.



The Food Ethics Council helps government, business and society to make wise choices about food and farming, which are principled, informed and inclusive.

"Independent thought and challenge, like that offered by the Food Ethics Council, is **invaluable** as people's food choices become more complex and reliable information more crucial."

Dame Deirdre Hutton, *Chair, UK Food Standards Agency*

"The Food Ethics Council have played an important role in helping our thinking about the future of sustainable farming and food policy. They have raised challenging questions for all of us who have responsibilities in this area and contributed views and research to this vital ongoing debate. Their **independence and integrity** is a valuable asset"

Sir Donald Curry, *Chair, UK Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy Delivery Group*

"The Food Ethics Council provides the **critical challenges businesses need** to consider today and in the future."

David Gregory, *Head of Technology, Marks and Spencer Food Division*

"The Food Ethics Council's work has helped to **stimulate debate** on key issues facing the food chain and pro-actively explore the policy implications."

Sue Davies, *Chief Policy Advisor, Which?*



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