

# What is 'better' and how could we get there?

James Woodward

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming



# Agroecology and Regenerative

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Better for:

- The environment
- High animal welfare
- Community and people
- Health and wellbeing
- Economic equity and resilience





# A transition to agroecological farming

- A vision and plan at the farm-level and local landscape-level to 2030
- Learning from others and feeling comfortable to make some mistakes
- Public and private financial support between now and 2030
- A strategy for local food systems that matches on-farm change
- Renewing our sense of culture and history in food, farming and our landscapes
- A political priority and embedding food and farming into social justice movement

# Existing policies that could get us there?

- Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes
- Supply chain codes of practice
- Dynamic procurement pilots
- Labelling consultation and changes
- Food Strategy recommendations

# Policies we need to get us there?

- **Rethink the** Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes
- Local food systems at the forefront of levelling up
- A Food Bill that brings together standards for food in procurement, supply chains etc.
- Agroecological food and farming at the centre of COP27

# What might stop us getting to 'better'?

- Cost of living and low incomes
- Lack of budget for public procurement
- Bad trade policy undermining standards and economic viability
- Simple ELM schemes that are too basic
- Little change in the makeup of supply chains and routes to market





Planet friendly diets  
won't ruin farmers  
Nikki Yoxall

@Howemill  
@GrampianGraziers  
[www.grampiangraziers.co.uk](http://www.grampiangraziers.co.uk)



# Some context...

First generation farmers

18 acres at home (Aberdeenshire, River Deveron)

100 additional acres through various licences and short term arrangements + 400 coming under management 2022

17 cattle (#TheWeeMob)

Shetlands and Galloways

Holistic Management / MSc Sustainable Food and Natural Resources

PhD Agroecological Transitions





57° North

-7°C Winter (-20 last year!)

Windy –  
proximity to the  
Cairngorms

A small byre – no  
livestock barns.

8 acres of native  
broadleaf  
woodland

Marginal grazing  
– LFA

Diverse native  
swards

Wet ground

Cattle – ecosystem  
engineers

Small, hardy native  
cattle.

Graziers on other  
people's land

Holistic  
Management

Diversity,  
Abundance and  
Nourishment

Direct sales of beef





## The food we eat

Poor diet is now the biggest risk factor for preventable ill health in England. Everyone should have enough good food to live a healthy life. Healthy food needs to be:

Affordable  
for everyone

A bigger part of  
the food supply

Available in  
our local area

Promoted  
and valued



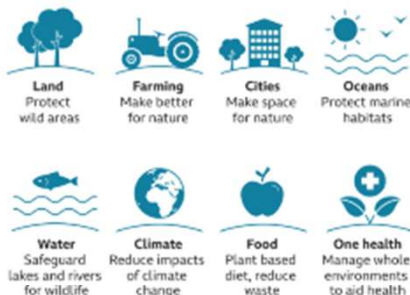
Food, Farming  
& Countryside  
Commission

## Accelerating the farming transition

To mitigate and adapt to climate breakdown, and to restore biodiversity and our natural resources, we need to work together to support our farmers to be a force for change.



Plan to restore biodiversity



## Farming for our future: The nature friendly climate solution we urgently need



Pasture-fed benefits our environment with:

- A lower carbon footprint than farms where cereal crops are grown for animal feed
- The use of legumes to enhance production without the use of chemical-based fertilisers
- Prohibited use of soya whose production is often associated with land use change and environmental damage



SCOTLAND  
THE BIG PICTURE

REWILDING: THE TIME IS NOW

Farming for 1.5°  
Independent inquiry  
on farming and  
climate change in  
Scotland

## Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

Discover how we are protecting and restoring Scotland's biodiversity through the ambitious Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.



# Landscapes of the future:

- Integrated
- Diverse
- Abundant
- Closed loop
- Resilient
- Healthy
- Engaging



# Landscapes of the future in practice:

- Better soil management to drive biological activity creating a foundation for biodiversity above ground
- High nature value grazing systems
- Prioritise (re) building biodiversity, alongside targeting greenhouse gas reductions and sequestration
- Innovative approaches to multifunctional land use such as agroforestry will add value across a range of priorities

(Farming for 1.5 degrees, 2020)



# Agroforestry





# Outwintering





# Efficient conversion of native flora





# High Nature Value





- Native breeds can contribute to efficient and profitable farms without mined minerals, winter housing or concentrate feed.
- They are intrinsically linked to the land in which they evolved and are perfectly adapted to the terrain, climate, soil and plant-life.
- This collection of contextual attributes gives a particular character to native breeds, much like “Le Terroir” that the French use to describe this same relationship in crops.



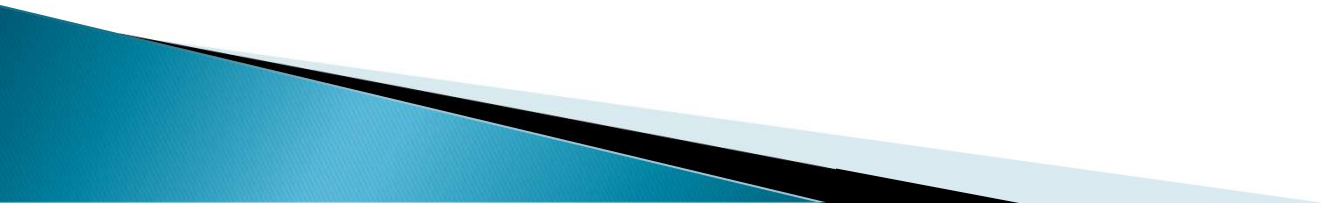
# Planet Friendly Diets Won't Ruin Farmers?

Dan Burdett



# Farm Background

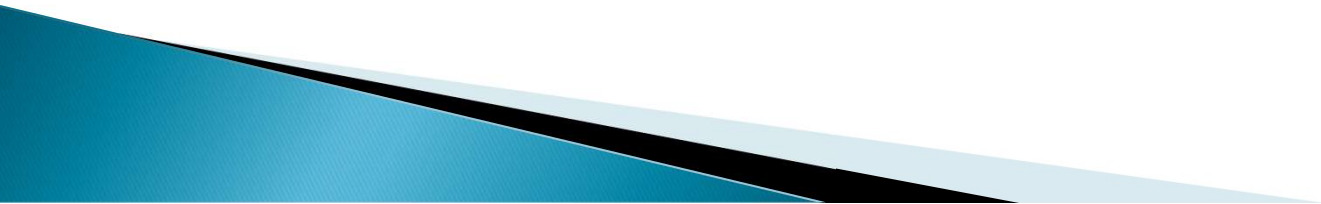
- ▶ Run 2 organic dairy farms in the South East
- ▶ Autumn calving 480 cows in total
- ▶ Grazing from February to November
- ▶ Winter Housed on self-feed silage
- ▶ Currently 5 FTE staff plus Dan
- ▶ Milk supplied to Mcdonalds via Arla
- ▶ Driven by soil health and diversity





# Who are Arla?

- ▶ Owned by 9700 farmers across Europe
- ▶ Largest dairy processor in the UK
- ▶ Growth is brand driven to drive value to it's owners
- ▶ Driven very much by market demands particularly those of retailers
- ▶ Expanding abroad into high growth markets



# What Drives Us?

- ▶ Diversity





# What Drives Us?

- ▶ Simplicity



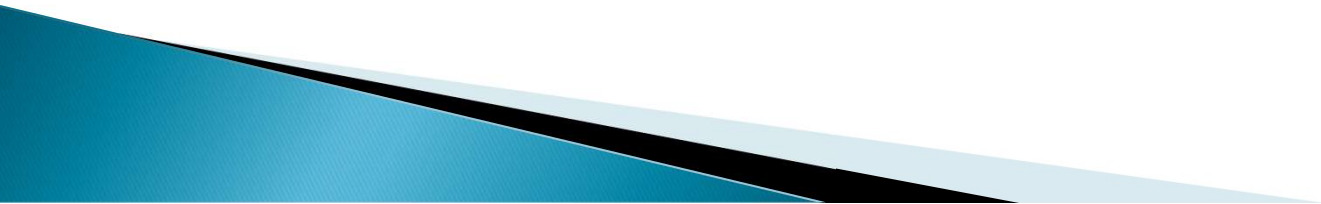
# What Drives Us?





# Challenges

- ▶ Uncertainty in the market and regulation
- ▶ Climate change
- ▶ Cheap food
- ▶ To understand the carbon and biodiversity credit market
- ▶ People
- ▶ Ignoring outside pressures



# Opportunities

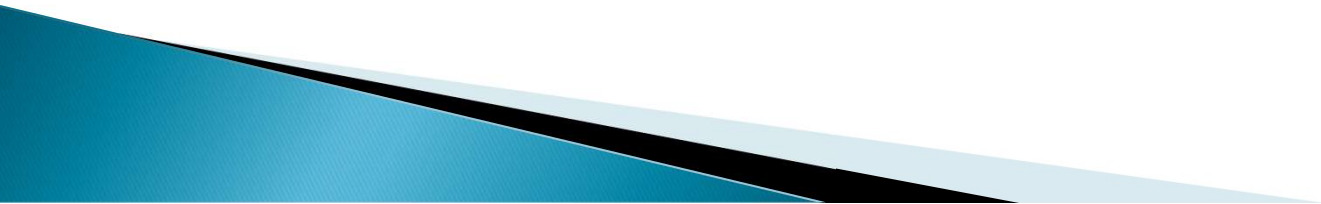
- ▶ To diversify our product portfolio
- ▶ Tap into the local food market
- ▶ Bring local communities closer to the farm
- ▶ Provide opportunities to bring others into farming
- ▶ Have a better understanding of how complex ecosystems work
- ▶ Work closer with other farmers





# Challenging the Naysayers

- ▶ We need solid data on our soils and farm ecosystems
- ▶ Tell our story with pride
- ▶ Have empathy and understanding when challenged by others



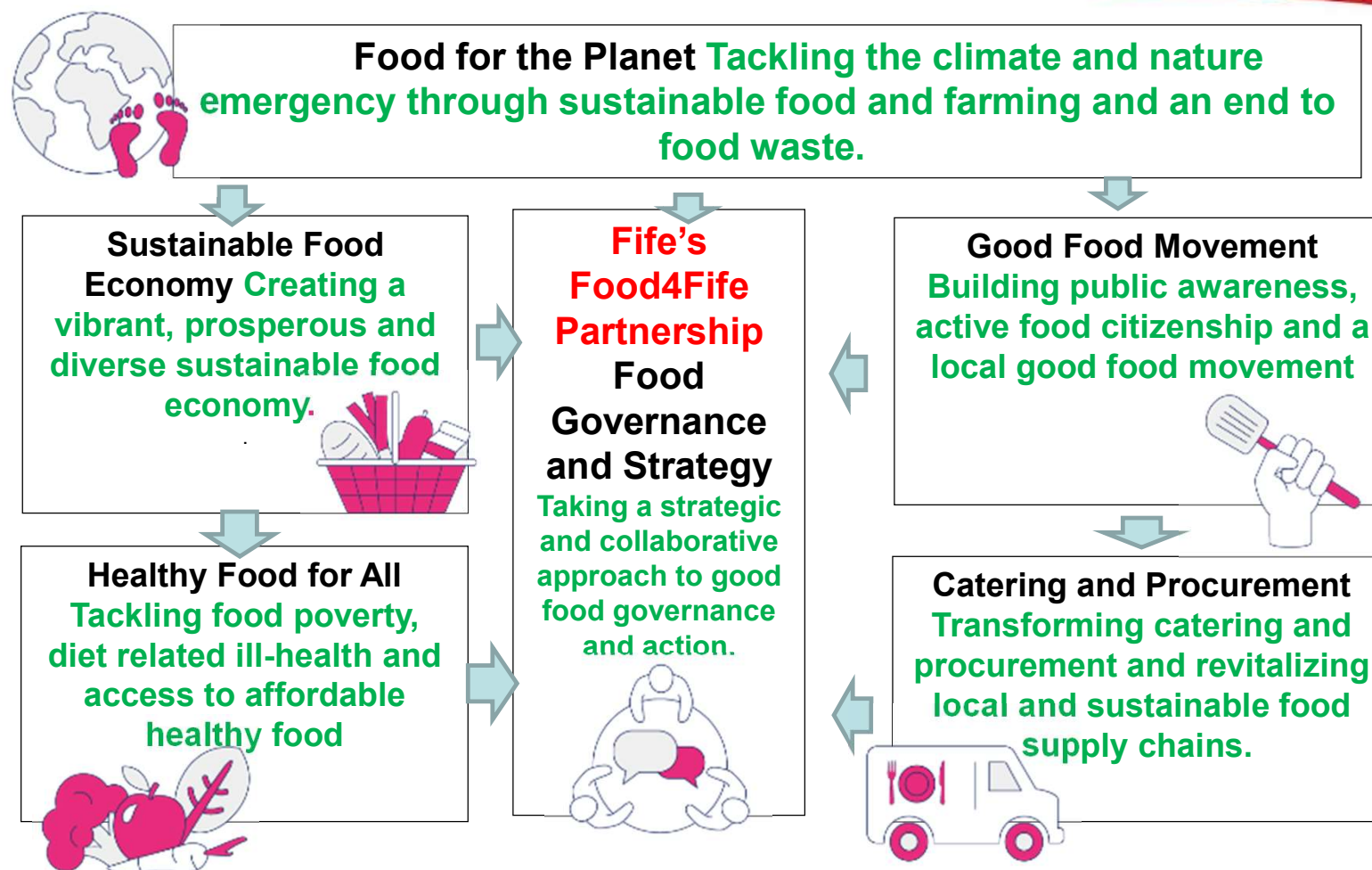


## Food4Fife and Fork2farm Dialogues

January 11<sup>th</sup> 2022

Carolyn Bell  
Climate Change & Zero Waste Team





## Fife Council Procurement and Facilities teams

- Feb 2021 - funding from Sustainable Food Places to setup a food partnership and write the food strategy for Fife
- My role food coordinator. I worked with our Fife Council teams to create a working group for Fife Council procurement. We also set up a Fife wide procurement team including the NHS, Uni's and Colleges in Fife.





## Fork to Farm Dialogues

- During 2021 I met a number of our farmers at face to face meetings. They worked with us at our Food Vision workshop and the Food summit in the summer of 2021.
- Our Fork to Farm dialogues first met in Aug 2021. We met for 1 hour a month in Aug, Sep and Oct.
- These were facilitated by Nourish Scotland and were attended by farmers, NFU, Procurement and Economic development members.
- Our film Fields of Hope reflected our conversations and was shown at Cop26 at Nourish Scotland's exhibition.



## Pilot projects - The Glen Pavilion Dunfermline

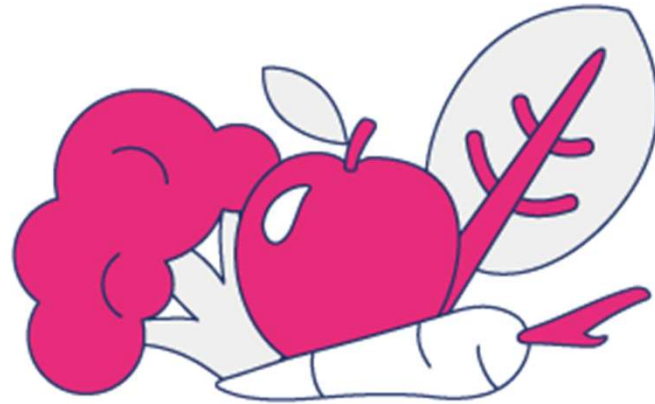


- Aim to provide local seasonal food in the café and for all events
- Jan- March set up
- April – June – meat
- July -Aug - salads
- Sep to Nov – seasonal veg
- Dec -write up report on progress.



## Schools meals pilot

- Working with 4 pilot schools who provide meals for 18 other primary schools
- Providing 1000 meals per day
- Set up March to June
- Supply climate friendly meat - August to Dec
- Write up report Dec



# Food4Fife Website and film



[Fork2Farm at Cop26 | Food for Fife](#)

[Fields of Hope Fife – YouTube](#)

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