

Food Policy for the 21st century: can we grow enough, sustainably and healthily?

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I give my answer first!

- **Yes...**
- ...probably...
- ...but only if there is big change...
- ...on many fronts...
- ...by everyone...
- ...government, supply chain...consumers
- ...all at once
- ...very fast!

So the big questions are:

- Q 1. Do we change fast enough now?
 - Answer: No, not fast or deep enough yet
- Q2. If not, will we be forced to change?
 - Answer: probably - by shocks such as war or water
- Q3. How could we get change quicker and more deeply?
 - Answer: with difficulty but we must try
- Q4. Is there any hope?
 - Answer: yes, there are signs of movement but we need to work very hard!

Summary

- Current food system is in trouble: neo-Malthusian questions return
- Sustainable diet = key to linking health, environment and social needs into culture
- Debate and actions are emerging
- A complex issue: all about values
- C21st challenges: Time? Limits? Ideology (eg choice)?

1. What' s the problem?

An old debate: the 3 M's



Karl Marx
1818-1883



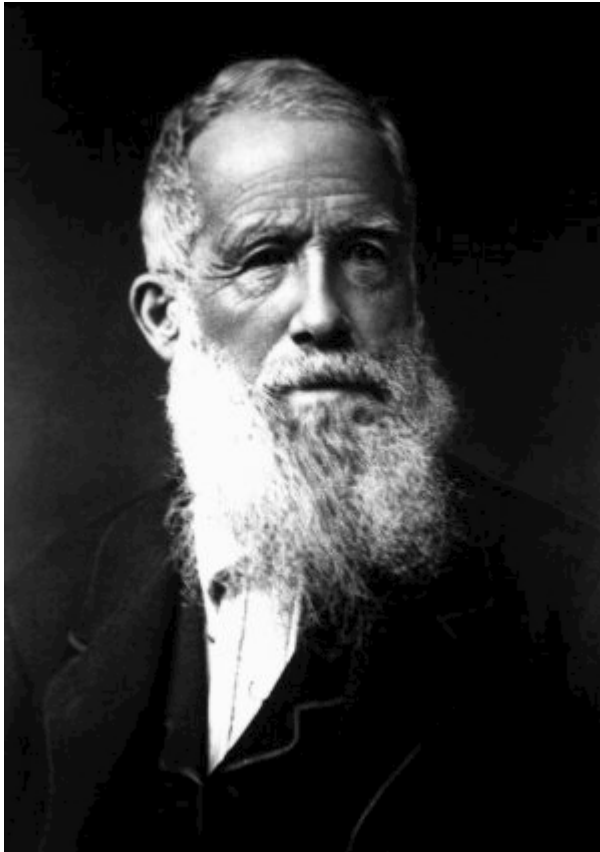
Rev. Thomas Malthus
(1766-1834)

*An Essay on the Principle of
Population (1798)*

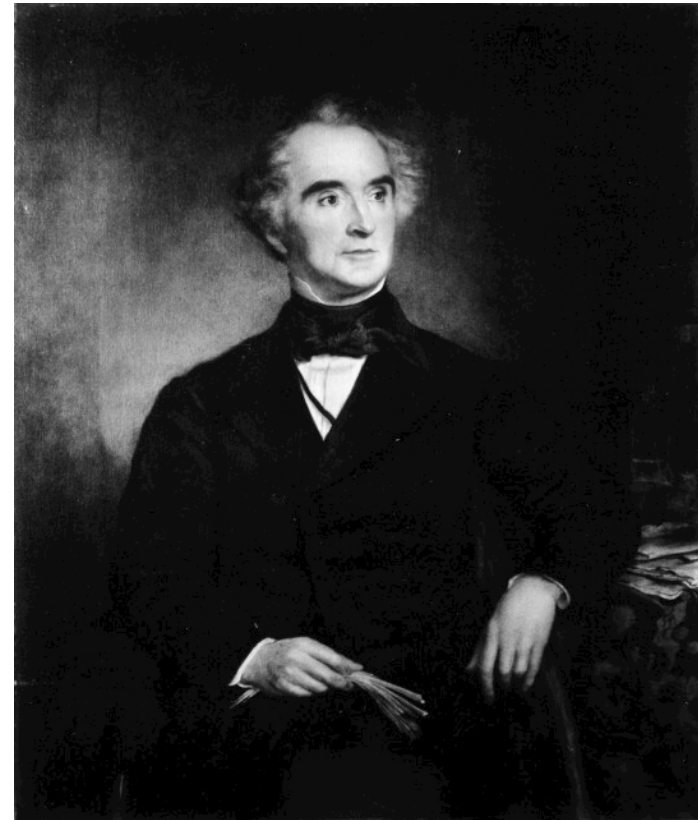


Gregor Mendel
Monk & geneticist
(1822-1884)

C19th Agricultural progressives



Sir John Bennet Lawes
agricultural research
(1803-1873)



Justus von Liebig
chemist (1803-1873)

Health progressives



Rudolf Virchow
Public health physician, Berlin
(1821 – 1902)



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Sir Joseph Bazalgette
Sewerage engineer, London
(1819 - 1891)

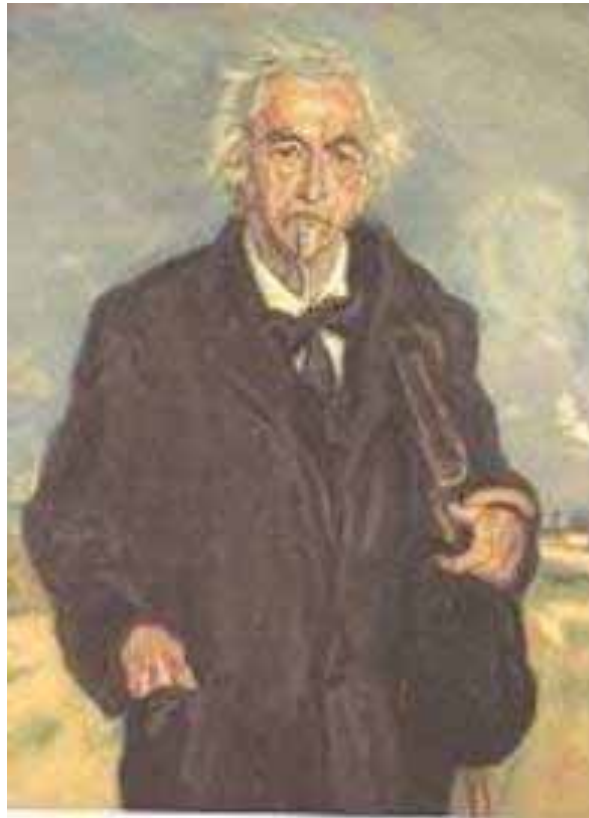
Social progressives



B Seebohm Rowntree
UK Social researcher
and reformer



(1871-1954)

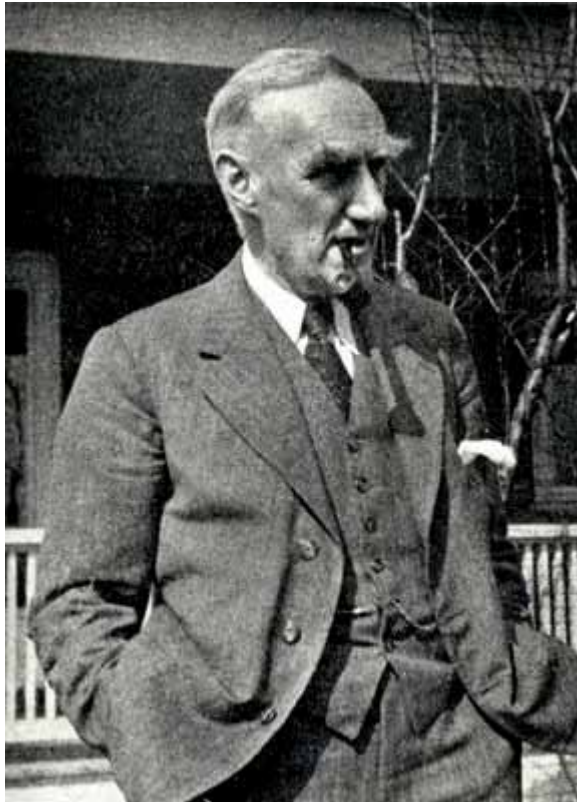


F Wibaut
Amsterdam alderman,
welfare & housing
champion (1859-1936)



School meals
(1906 in England)

Linking food, health, income & justice



John Boyd Orr
(1880-1971)
public health
1st D-G of FAO



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Elsie Widdowson
(1908-2000)
nutritionist



George Stapledon
(1882-1960)
soil scientist

They seized their moment and applied their integrated vision

- World War 2
 - NL famine (1944-45)
- Wave of initiatives
 - UN institutions eg FAO created 1946
 - Common Market 1957 Treaty of Rome → CAP
- Food as a litmus test for progress
 - taming the state
 - Transcending corporate / economic uncertainties

The C20th policy formula

(the Productionist paradigm)

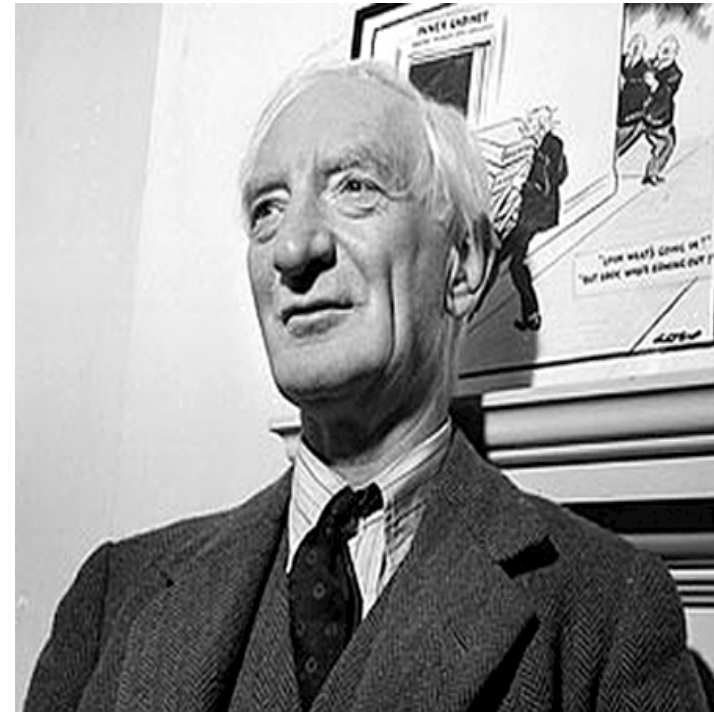
Science + capital + distribution
→ output → cheaper food
→ health = progress

Food & Agriculture as key to progress



Sicco Mansholt (1908-1995)

1st European Agriculture
Commissioner for 1958-1972



William Beveridge (1879-1963)

Senior civil servant Ministry of Food
in WW1; author *Social Insurance* 1942

The model faces challenges

- Reliance on oil (hence 1970s crisis)
- It was altered in the 1970s by neo-liberalism
 - Market-led
 - No overall vision
- It is now meeting other environmental limits
 - Water, population, eco-systems, land, fertilisers (Atlas)
 - Capital - now supporting bankers not green vision
 - Social resistance – consumers locked into consumerism?

Modern food culture: celebrities, burgerisation, supermarketisation



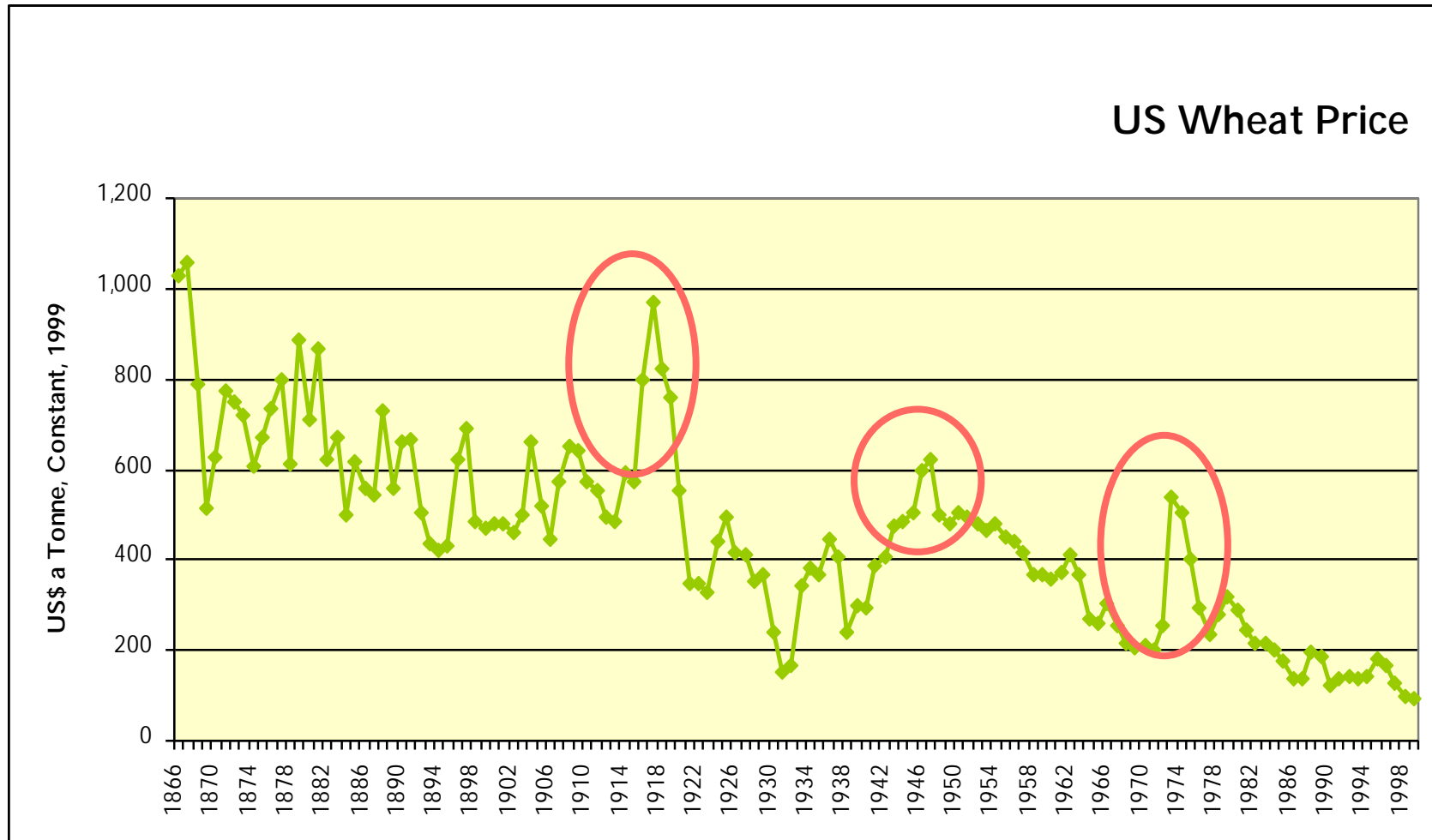
ASK FOR MORE



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Prices fall: the long view?

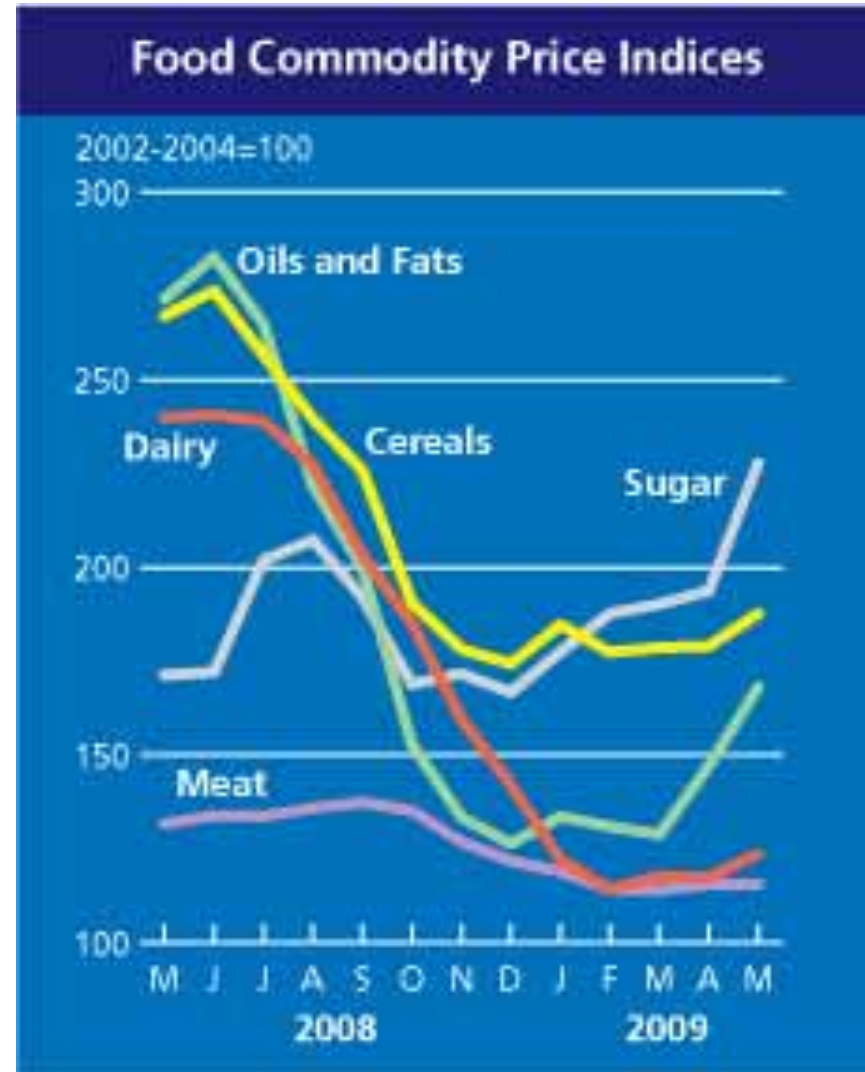
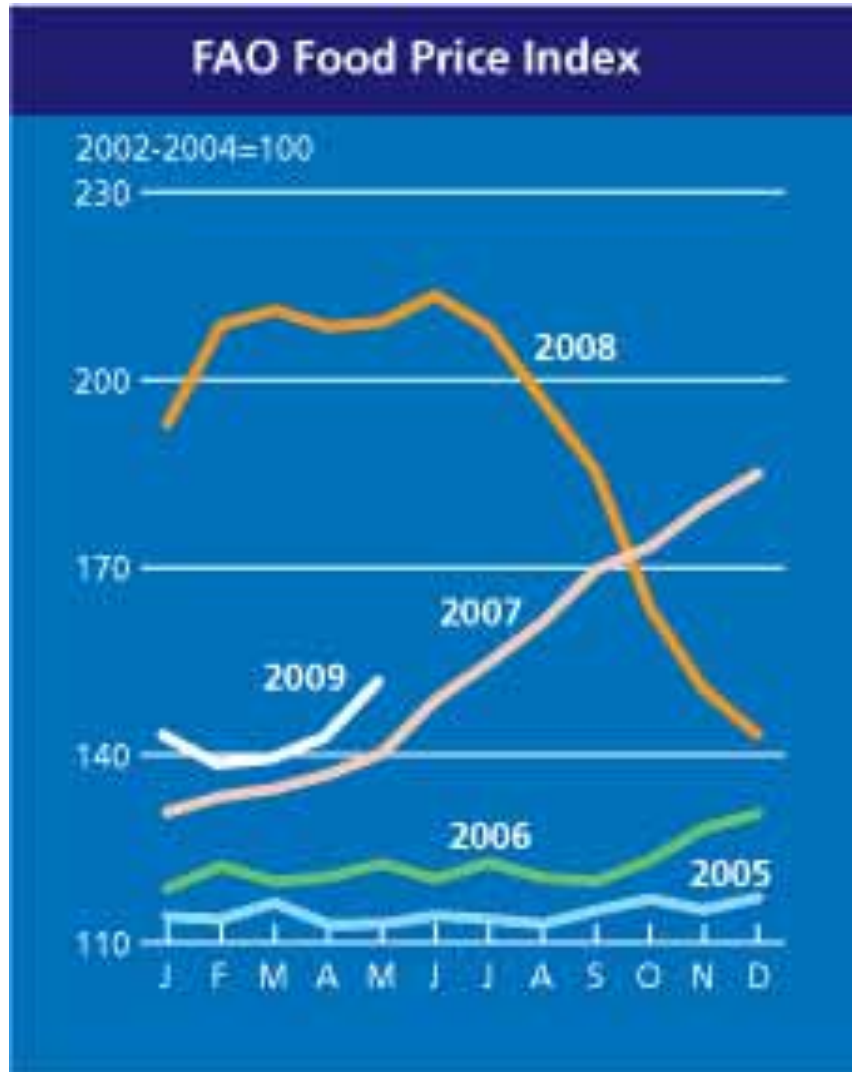


Source: USDA



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Prices...up and downand rising again? 2005-09



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Source: <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/en/> (accessed June 26 2009]

2. The C21st challenge is to deliver a sustainable food system

New policy based on New (& Old) Fundamentals

- Climate change
- Fuel / oil / energy
- Water
- Biodiversity
- Soil
- Land use
- Labour
- Population (9bn 2050)
- Urbanisation
- Affluence (BRICs +)
- Nutrition transition
- Inequality
- Healthcare costs

The C21st challenge: how to inject Omni-Standards into business and supply chains?

Quality:

- Fresh (?)
- Localness (?)
- Seasonality

Social values:

- Animal welfare
- Working conditions
- Equality
- Cost internalisation

Environmental:

- Climate change
- Water
- Land use
- Biodiversity

Health:

- Safety
- Nutrition
- Access / affordability

3. Responses are emerging (but are they fast enough?)

Sweden gives EU lead

- May 2009
- Offers evidence-based eco-nutrition guidelines
- Now submitted to the European Commission
- Joint work by National Food Administration & Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
- Other input (e.g. Swedish Board of Fisheries)
- Framed around eco-conscious consumers, rather than population
- Focus on key food groups



Environmentally effective food choices
Proposal notified to the EU ¹ 15.05.09

1. -----IND- 2009 0292 S-- EN- ----- 20090608 --- --- PROJET

LIVSMEDELS
VERKET
NATIONAL FOOD ADMINISTRATION

The National Food Administration's environmentally effective food choices

Proposal notified to the EU¹

Concerns the food groups:

Meat – beef, lamb, pork and chicken

Fish and shellfish

Fruits and berries, vegetables and leguminous plants

Potatoes, cereals and rice

Cooking fat

Water

NL Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality June 2008

- *Policy Document on Sustainable Food: towards sustainable production and consumption of food*
http://www.minlnv.nl/portal/page?_pageid=116,1640321&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_file_id=39545
- Objectives
 - *Stimulating sustainable innovations in the Dutch agrifood complex*
 - *Enable and entice Dutch consumers to buy sustainable (and healthy) food*
 - *Influencing the international agenda*
- Approach:
 - voluntarism, information, innovation (GMOs), productivity, etc

UK Cabinet Office 2008 reports



Food: an analysis of the issues The Strategy Unit

January 2008

(Updated & re-issued August 2008)

This discussion paper presents an analysis of a number of the key issues pertaining to food and food policy in the UK. It is not a statement of Government policy

Revision D – 8 August 2008

Making
government
work better

Food Matters Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century

The Strategy Unit
July 2008

Making
government
work better



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UK : internal government action

- Scotland
 - *Recipe for Success – Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy* (2009)
- England
 - Council of Food Policy Advisors
 - Integrated Advice Scheme
 - Healthy Food Mark (DH, FSA, Defra)
- Sustainable Development Commission
 - Sustainable Diets report for Defra (Nov 09)

Company actions

- 2008 Tesco gives £25m to University of Manchester Sustainable Consumption Institute
- 2007 IGD Food Industry Sustainability Strategy Champions Group focus on low carbon + ethics
- Focus on waste (jointly with Govt funded WRAP) www.wrap.org.uk → resource efficiency
- Ideology:
 - Self interest, cost-cutting, long-termism,
- Split focus on consumers: choice vs choice-edit?

Consumer actions: various strategies

- Big bang:
 - Total change – eg meat only 1 x per week
- Gradualism - ease consumers into change
 - From light bulbs to food?
- Hierarchy of impact
 - SDC paper (forthcoming)
- Do nothing
 - Let consumers decide

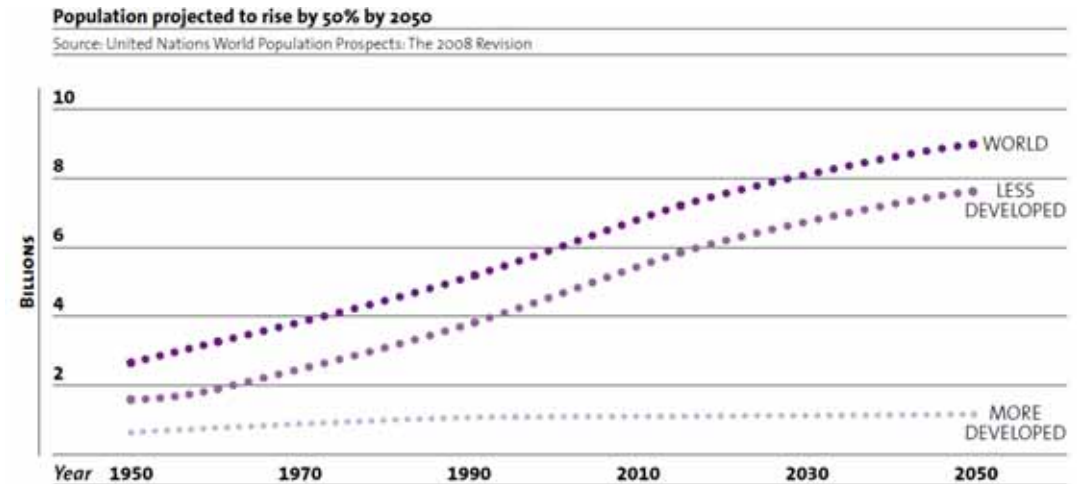
4. Barriers and problems

All these demands at time of complex policy architecture

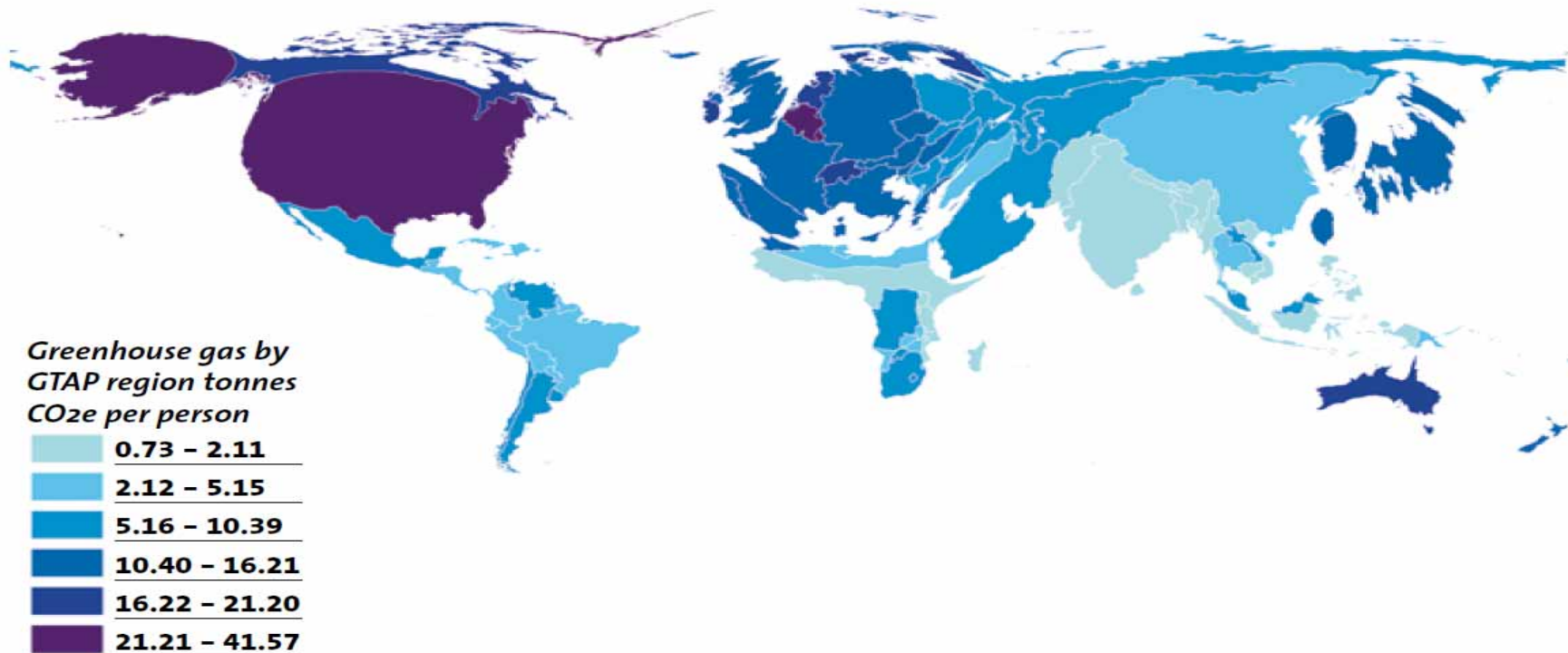
- multi-level:
 - local, sub-national, national, regional, global
- multi-agency
 - public, private & civil society
- rapid concentration of power over supply chains
 - intra and inter-national
- Complex influences:
 - laws, regulations, standards → twitter /media/hype

Politics: is the problem population or wealth?

source: Hertwich & Peters / Sustainable Consumption Institute (2009)
<http://www.sci.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/copenhagenpaper.pdf>



CARTOGRAM MORPHED BY TOTAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM CONSUMPTION



Complex ideological challenge

- Prices and cheapness
- Choice vs choice-editing
- How can consumers choose if advice is incoherent, eg fish – to eat it or not?
- Companies are more used to integrated thinking than Governments
- Food culture is fragmented:
 - meat & dairy on feast days not everyday
 - de-skilled consumers for low carbon living



NGO pressure: Sustain on fish: Sustainability vs. nutrition vs. safety

source: Sustain (2005) Like shooting fish in a barrel www.sustainweb.org

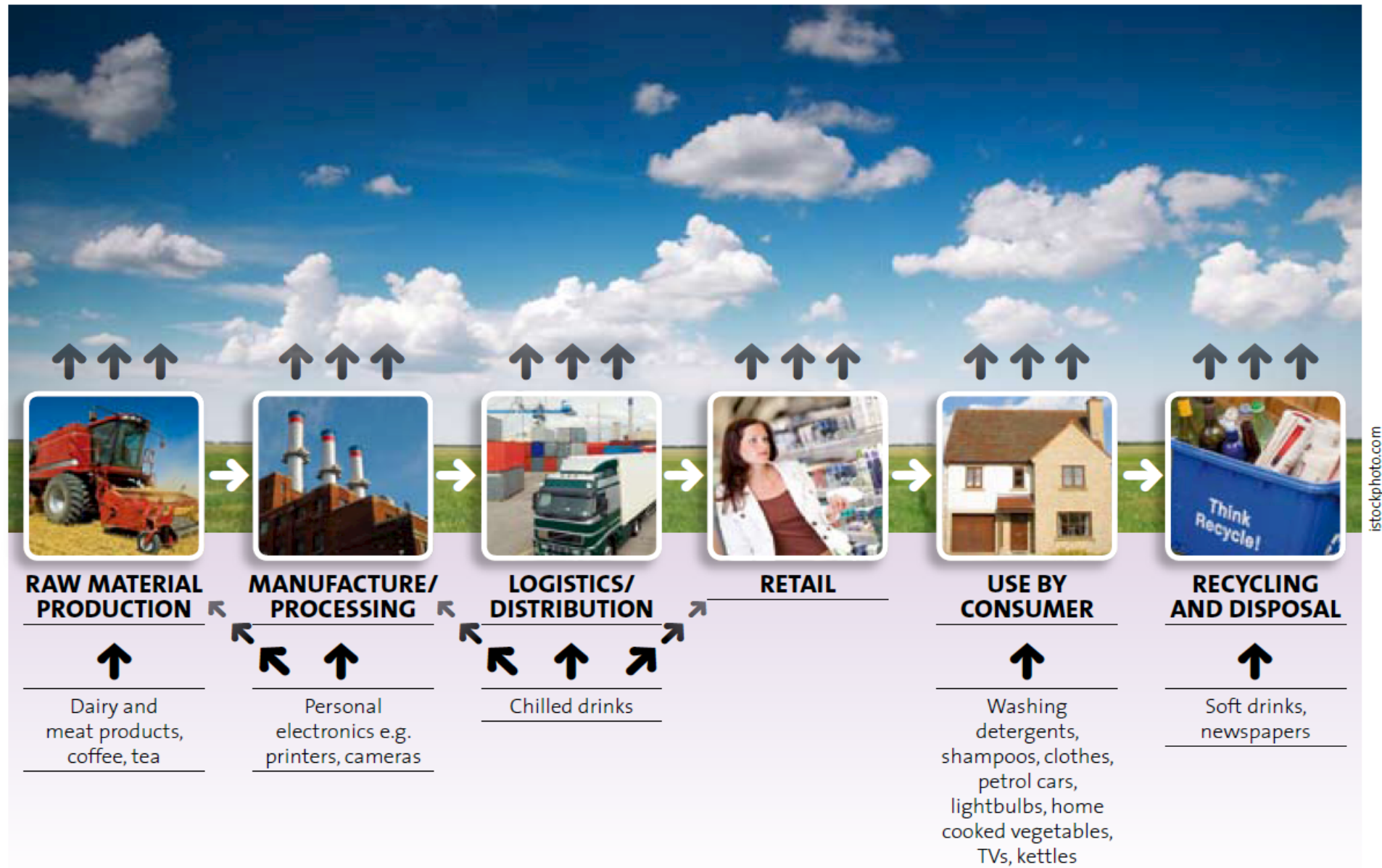
<i>Fish species</i>	<i>Oily?</i>	<i>Omega 3 per 100g</i>	<i>Sustainable?</i>	<i>Contaminated?</i>
Sardines	yes	2.02	yes	no
Kippers	yes	1.83	yes	no
Trout	yes	1.27	yes	no
Mussels	yes	0.66	yes	no
Herring	yes	0.6	yes	no
Cod (pacific)	no	0	no	no
Monkfish	no	0	no	no
Salmon (farmed)	yes	1.85	no	yes
Marlin	no	0	no	yes
Plaice	no	0	no	no



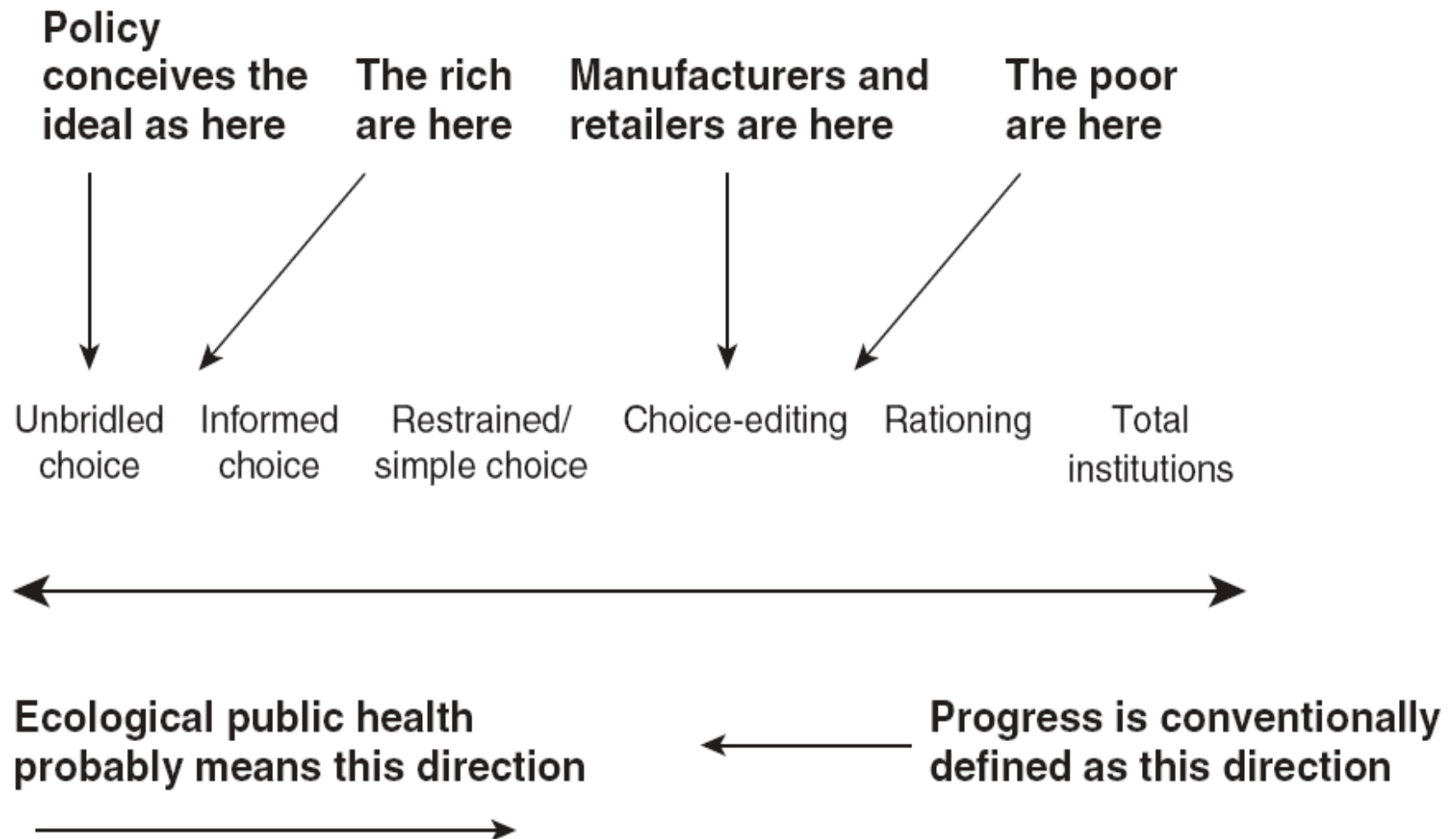
Different messages for different products at different sectors

Source: Sustainable Consumption Institute 2009 pg 22

The full carbon lifecycle of products giving examples of key “hot spots”



Re-think policy focus on choice



5. Looking ahead

1. Consumers change

- We must change **what we eat & how it is produced**
- No romance about turning clocks back
- Need for new cultural norms / ‘rules’
 - No clarity in everyday culture yet
- Period of social experimentation to watch:
 - Fife Diet (Vancouver) <http://fifediet.co.uk/>
 - New consumer co-operatives eg Growing Communities Hackney <http://www.growingcommunities.org/>
- Most consumers want choices taken upstream and to be given feasible alternatives (SCI report 2009)

2. Sharing lessons

- **Regions:** Toscana, Wales, Scotland, Cuba
- **Cities:** London (2012), Toronto, Belo Horizonte, Amsterdam, Roma
- **Food Policy Councils:** 100 in USA, Toronto
- **Markets rebuilt:** Barcelona, Borough (London)
- **Transition towns:** Europe
- **Urban agriculture:** Africa, Asia
- **Projects:** Incredible Edible Todmorden (Lancs UK)

3. Support / invigorate pursuit of new business model

- Less focus on price....more on quality and means
- Industry creating its own standards
 - GlobalGAP, GFSI, SAI, etc
 - G30 top TNCs initiative October 16 2009 Coca-Cola, Tesco, Unilever, News International
- Some remarkable initiatives:
 - Marks & Spencer Plan A
 - Reduced GHG dairy initiatives eg WalMart-Asda; J Sainsbury
- Re-emergence of co-operation as framework:
 - TNCs G30 → box schemes / CSA → reinvention of Co-ops?

4. Governments must be prepared to use the full range of policy levers ('soft' to 'hard')

- Advice
- Labeling
- Education
- Public information
- Endorsements
- Welfare support
- Product standards
- Licensing
- Subsidies
- Competition rules
- Taxes & fiscal measures
- Bans
- Rationing

5. Accept a new cultural direction

- Priority is to cut down on meat & dairy (Stern)
- More plants (fruit and veg) = ‘win, win’
- Eat more locally, seasonably to be low carbon
- Get biodiversity into the field & onto the plate
- Build exercise into shopping (NL model)
- Support tap water not bottled drinks
- Accept price signals will change

Thanks