

## University of East Anglia Sustainable Food Policy

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## **1. Objectives and scope**

The University of East Anglia recognises its responsibility to carry out its procurement and service delivery activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, whilst also encouraging and promoting the benefits of healthy eating. We strive to incorporate environmental and social considerations into our product and service selection process. We recognise that it is our responsibility to encourage our suppliers to minimise negative environmental and social effects associated with the products and services they provide. We will also strive to ensure that local and smaller suppliers are not discriminated against in the procurement process, and that they are actively encouraged to participate in tendering opportunities.

We will actively seek to engage with all stakeholders and customers in the continued development of policy and procedure in respect of healthy and sustainable food.

This policy applies to all food and beverage service and retail outlets at the University of East Anglia, namely Catering and Hospitality (CAT), Retail and Union House Catering (RTL) and UEA Students' Union (UEASU). INTO University of East Anglia (INTO UEA) is excluded from this policy but engages with the University's efforts to increase sustainable and healthy food on campus.

## **2. The bigger picture**

The University of East Anglia is a Signatory to the SDG Accord, the university and college sector's collective response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>. We declared a joint climate and biodiversity emergency in June 2019 and have set a science-based target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. The University has an Environmental Management System (EMS) which is certified to the international standard, ISO 14001.

We are working towards external accreditation by mapping our progress against the Sustainable Restaurant Association's *Food Made Good 50* self-assessment tool.

## **3. Procurement**

We make decisions based upon a balance between economic, social and environmental factors to achieve best value for money on a whole life costing basis. Local and smaller suppliers are encouraged to participate in tendering processes, and we provide advice and guidance where appropriate. We also continue to increase the number of supply agreements with locally based companies and place particular emphasis on locally sourced fresh ingredients. When seeking new suppliers and contracts, we aim to integrate our Sustainable Food Policy requirements where possible.

## **4. Drinking water**

In order to provide an alternative to purchasing bottled water, mains water is available at all central food service outlets and in key vending locations. Customers can fill their own water bottles at self-service

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals which are designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The global goals were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030. Further information about the UN SDGs: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> and SDG Accord: <https://www.sdgaccord.org/>

drinking water facilities or on request. Free water is actively promoted in outlets. We provide bottled mains water for all functions, meetings and events in reusable glass bottles and glassware, whenever possible.

#### **5. Seasonal fruit and vegetables**

When planning our menus, we will use a sustainable analysis of our suppliers and use produce in season. Where this is not possible, in consultation with our fruit and vegetable supplier, we always seek the most suitable and sustainable alternative produce. We consistently strive to increase and promote the use of seasonal fruit and vegetables.

#### **6. Milk and dairy products**

We ensure the milk and cheese we supply has been as a minimum Red Tractor Assured and prefer RSPCA Assured from British farmers and, where possible, from East Anglian sources. A dairy free alternative to milk will be offered in all service outlets and at all functions, meetings and events. Milk and dairy free alternatives to milk will be offered in reusable glass bottles at all functions, meetings and events whenever possible.

#### **7. Eggs**

'Free-range' whole eggs are used for our onsite food production and within retailed products where ingredients are traceable. When using other egg products e.g. frozen whole eggs, egg whites or mayonnaise etc. we use free-range if available.

#### **8. Increasing plant-based and vegetarian meals**

All outlets at the University of East Anglia, provide a balanced range of plant-based and vegetarian meals. We actively promote the availability of plant-based meals and the reduction of meat and dairy for both personal health choices and environmental impact. All our menus highlight vegan and vegetarian options with equal or less prominence for fish and meat choices. Vegetarian and vegan meals are available across all services, and we make use of alternative plant-based proteins such as pulses, beans and tofu, placing an emphasis on wholegrains and seasonal vegetables. The selling price for processed products and red meat is inflated to encourage a sustainable biased diet.

#### **9. Sustainable fish**

Continue to limit fish consumption by eliminating the use of fish from the Marine Conservation Society's 'Fish to Avoid' list, and where possible aim to only serve fish with a 'best choices' rating from the MCS Good Fish Guide, based on information at the time of purchase. Investigate various species of tinned fish and the capture method, aiming to purchase more sustainable alternatives, where possible. Use diverse species of white fish to reduce pressure on sensitive stocks. Consider other options for increasing the sustainability of fish, including opting for pole and line caught fish, promoting consumption outside of the 'big five' (cod, salmon, tuna, haddock, prawns) and reducing or eliminating the consumption of carnivorous aquaculture species such as shrimp, prawns and salmon in favour of lower-impact aquaculture species such as tilapia.

#### **10. Higher welfare meat**

We seek to ensure that the meat we serve is, as a minimum, Red Tractor assured and prefer RSPCA Assured and continue to work towards 100% of procured meat meeting higher welfare standards. We also aim to source the majority of our meat from UK farms.

### **11. Ethically traded products**

All tea, coffee and sugar is Fairtrade and/or (where applicable) Rainforest Alliance certified. The University of East Anglia is committed to increasing the use and sale of ethically traded products and ingredients wherever possible and, in partnership with the UEASU, raise awareness through promotions and events. We are committed to fair and balanced procurement; selecting suppliers via an evaluation process, who demonstrate corporate and social responsibility in addition to compliance to the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Where possible we will aspire to buy products that support our local community and if we cannot buy local, we will aim to buy products that support other communities.

### **12. Palm oil**

We recognise that the widespread use of palm oil has significant environmental and social impacts. We aim to reduce the number of products we serve or sell in retail outlets that contain palm oil or palm oil derivatives. As part of this aim, we are establishing a baseline by working with our current suppliers to determine which products contain palm oil or palm oil derivatives. Wherever possible we aim to purchase certified palm oil free or certified sustainable palm oil products, such as International Palm Oil Free Certification Trademark, Orangutan Alliance, and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

### **13. Waste and recycling**

We promote a zero-waste culture of 'rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle', in order to significantly reduce waste and increase recycling across all areas of the university estate. We regularly monitor and audit our practices to reduce waste and improve our reuse and recycling in line with University targets. We actively seek to reduce the amount of packaging used in both sales items and the supply chain. We are always working to reduce our food waste, however food towards the end of its Use By date is offered to customers at reduced price (on the shelf or via an App). All outlets have clearly labelled food, dry mixed recycling (DMR) and general waste bins to encourage customers to separate waste. Any food from outlet bins or production kitchens is sent to an anaerobic digestion facility. Our waste oil is converted into biodiesel. Plastic bottles go to a recycling plant, where they are recycled into other plastic items. General waste is not put into landfill and instead is incinerated and used to generate energy.

### **14. Disposables**

We recognise that catering and retail outlets can play a significant role in the fight against plastic pollution and overuse of disposable items. All Campus Kitchen and UEASU outlets sell reusable cups and containers to incentivise customers to move away from single-use containers. Reusable cutlery and crockery are provided in favour of disposables in all outlets and at all functions, meetings and events whenever possible. Whilst considering alternatives to disposable items, we will consult and work with our waste contractors to ensure that items can be recycled.

### **15. Cutting carbon and reducing water use**

We continue to work with colleagues across the University to reduce carbon emissions and water use. All catering and retail outlets take part in the Big Holiday Switch Off and Big Spring Switch Off campaigns. We regularly monitor and audit our practices to reduce energy and water use in line with University targets. We also regularly review equipment, maintenance contracts and cold storage equipment. When

replacing catering and refrigeration equipment we purchase energy, water and carbon efficient versions, according to energy performance of operational rating.

#### **16. Wellbeing**

Healthy eating and the provision of food and beverages that support a healthy lifestyle are key considerations in the planning and delivery of all University of East Anglia catering operations. We promote and market healthier food and beverage choices in all outlets.

We work to identify products and practices that can be changed to improve the nutritional value of our food, such as choosing different cooking methods or healthier cooking oils. All in-house products will not directly feature hydrogenated fats and unnecessary additives, such as emulsifiers and monosodium glutamate. Where a dish is made in-house, we will control the levels of salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat in our products, in line with Public Health England guidance.

#### **17. Customer and stakeholder engagement**

We continue to raise awareness of sustainable food, our achievements, milestones and aspirations. We also continue to engage with all customers and stakeholders and encourage feedback and consultation on significant changes to our service via the Campus Kitchen insight programme.

#### **18. Policy review and publication**

We constantly review our obligations under current laws. The Sustainable Food Implementation Team are accountable for the delivery of this Policy and EMS objectives relating to sustainable food. The Implementation Team reports progress to the Sustainability Board. The Sustainable Food Policy is reported on and reviewed every three years by the Sustainability Board, or more frequently when required. The Policy will be published on the University of East Anglia's website.