

Scottish Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme

Meeting Four Report – EAST CENTRAL

Food Tourism – What is local?

National Museum of Flight – Tuesday 1st October 2019



The fourth East Central meeting of the three-year Scottish Enterprise Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme took place on Tuesday 1st October 2019.

The meeting focused on the theme 'Food Tourism – What is local?', highlighting areas such as costs, benefits, logistics and the impact on a business that sources and provides local produce.

29 individuals from farming/agritourism enterprises attended the event from all over Scotland with people travelling from as far north as Aberdeenshire and as far south as Dumfries.

Guest speaker for the day was Sandra Reid from [Fare Consulting](#). Sandra has over 15 years consultancy experience and offers business support in food service, accommodation, retail and events.

Janie Newman from [Visit Scotland](#) also spoke about the importance of experiencing Scottish produce for visitors and the [Taste our Best](#) scheme.

The meeting covered three main areas including;

- What's is local?
- Supplying your own farm produce to guests
- Environmental health requirements for serving food and drink

OVERALL SUMMARY & ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING

1. Consideration in buying produce to sell in the café includes
QUALITY
CONSISTENCY OF SUPPLY
CONSISTENCY OF DELIVERIES
PROXIMITY TO PRODUCTION (HOW LOCAL IS SUPPLIER)
ENSURING PRODUCE IS SCOTTISH WHERE POSSIBLE
PRICE
(not necessarily in this order)
2. Local does not always equal best quality or best solution.
3. Sourcing SCOTTISH produce and telling the story of that produce i.e. you have bought from a jam supplier in Dumfries & Galloway but it's another farm diversification and in your view the best jam in Scotland, (tell the story), is a better solution than buying what you deem to be a poorer quality more local product, and/or a product that doesn't work for the business.
4. It will always be a challenge to have the whole menu as "local" or Scottish so pick out particular very local items and use them and do a great job at highlighting their story and the link to your café. Particularly seasonal local items. i.e. Honey from hives on your farm. Flour from a local mill. Asparagus in season from a farm a few miles away.
5. Jo and Stuart should work on telling the story of particular food and drink products being featured in changing seasonal menus. Use storyboards in the café, social media and the website to highlight use of East Lothian and Scottish produce. Feature suppliers. Have meet the suppliers events. Also focus on farmhouse baking skills, Jo undertaking scone making demonstrations to fill potential slow times in autumn/winter.

East Central monitor farmers Stuart and Jo McNicol also discussed their experiences with using local produce through the café at DRIFT, highlighting some of the challenges they have faced along the way (see DRIFT café summary and update in Appendix 1).

GUEST SPEAKER DRIFT. SUMMARY

[Click here](#) to access the full video of Sandra's talk which was recorded live at the meeting.

Prior to the meeting Sandra met with East Central Monitor Farmers Stuart and Jo to discuss some of the local produce they use in the DRIFT.

They focused on six of the main ingredients and looked at where they currently get the supply from, highlighting the pros and cons they have faced since establishing the business in June 2018.

What is local?

'Locally grown' refers to food and other agricultural products (wool, flowers etc.) that are grown or produced, processed and then sold within a certain area.

There is no standard definition of 'local' and therefore depending on who you ask, local may be defined by;

- The distance to market/abattoir
- Protected Geographical Indications (e.g. Scotch beef PGI)
- Staying within state or city borders
- By other regional boundaries

Wholesaler v Local Supplier

Wholesaler

- You can buy in bulk and therefore cheaper;
- On the other hand, they can deliver more regularly so businesses don't have to keep a large stock;
 - o DRIFT. have limited space for storage so can't cope with large orders being brought in;
- Tend to have a member of staff designated to your account and keeps a log of your regular orders etc.;
 - o They will look through your orders and roughly know what you should be ordering and when to order it;
- Wholesalers are good at working with local suppliers;
 - o Where possible wholesalers will try and source the produce locally;
- Local producers may be limited to how much stock they can supply (e.g. volume of flour).

Local

- Supports other local businesses;
- Helps promote your business through theirs (e.g. butcher advertising for you and vice versa);
- Unique selling point for your business.

DRIFT. Ingredients Focus

- Flour;
- Butter;
- Bacon;
- Eggs;
- Hot chocolate;
- Dairy (yogurt, milk etc.).

Flour

Main challenge = volume

- DRIFT. use up to 50kg of flour a week;
- Previously used flour from a local producer, Mungowells through their wholesalers (Green City);
 - o Only supplied in small bags;
 - o Only delivered once a week;

= Unable to deal with volume.

- Now using new wholesalers (Biofood) with the flour not locally sourced;
 - o More efficient service;
 - o The wholesales phones weekly to check orders;
 - o They deliver more than once a week helping the issue with limited storage;
 - o Larger bags of flour.

****Actions from meeting****

Angus McDowall from Mungowells attended the meeting and informed Stuart and Jo that they supply larger bags of flour than what they were getting through Green City. Stuart and Angus to have a discussion about potentially starting to use Mungowells again if they can provide larger bags of flour regularly.

Butter

Main challenge = taste, origin and cost

- DRIFT. don't want to use small wrapped butter portions (which are the cheapest alternative);
- They currently use florets, which they find very efficient and limits waste, but they are sourced from Ireland;
- They have spoken to other local companies such as the Edinburgh Butter Company, but they are quite costly (£8 delivery) and have a minimum order.

****Actions from meeting****

Stuart and Jo are continuing to look for a local source to supply the Florets (a company in Forfar could be an option). Any local dairy businesses looking to diversify could have a potential market??

Bacon

Main challenge = volume and provenance

- DRIFT. currently use around 2,000 rashers of bacon/month;
 - o This will increase due to more menu options being offered at DRIFT.;
- They currently source their bacon through the local butchers in North Berwick;
 - o The butcher sources the bacon through their wholesaler;
- Discussion on whether Stuart and Jo should cut out the middle man and go direct to the wholesaler.
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****Actions from meeting****

Overall feedback was to continue to source through butcher for various reasons;

- Lack of storage at DRIFT.;
- They can go to the butcher six days a week and are guaranteed to get enough produce;
- Butcher will help with the traceability story. Takes the pressure off DRIFT. as they can use the butcher to help inform customers where the bacon comes from (it is sourced from within the UK but not necessarily Scotland).

Eggs

Main challenge = consistency of supply

- DRIFT. use around 50 dozen eggs/week;
 - o Again, volume increasing with more 'brunch' options available on the menu;
- Originally used a local farmer for the supply of eggs (very good standards) however;
 - o Inconsistency of size;
 - o Volume was variable (often didn't have enough eggs for what DRIFT. needed);
 - o Price;
- They now use the wholesaler to supply eggs;
 - o Still Scottish produce;
 - o Less than half the price.

****Actions from meeting****

Continue to use the wholesaler due to the significant difference in price and the fact that they can get regular, consistent stock. They eggs are still Scottish, just not 'local'.

Hot Chocolate

Main challenge = quality versus provenance

- DRIFT. currently use a Belgium chocolate spoon option which goes in hot milk (milk, dark (vegan) & white chocolate options);
 - o Consistent product;
 - o Quite costly;
- There are currently a large number of chocolatiers in the East Lothian area and wider Scotland, so there is potential to source chocolate more locally?

****Actions from meeting****

It was decided that quality should be the overriding factor so DRIFT. should continue to use the chocolate spoons if they have good feedback on taste/quality.

Dairy (cheese, milk, cream cheese, yogurt)

Main challenge = taste and provenance

- DRIFT.'s preference is to buy local and support dairy farmers;
 - o They use Biofood to keep the consistency of supply and delivery (again wholesaler uses local produce where possible);
- Taste and flavour are key (especially cheese);
 - o They bulk buy pre grated cheese to save staff time/waste;
- Previously purchased milk from a local dairy but they stopped supplying liquid milk.

****Actions from meeting****

Price is a big factor again – premium over provenance? Stuart and Jo to continue to look for locally sourced produce and challenge wholesaler to supply local were possible.

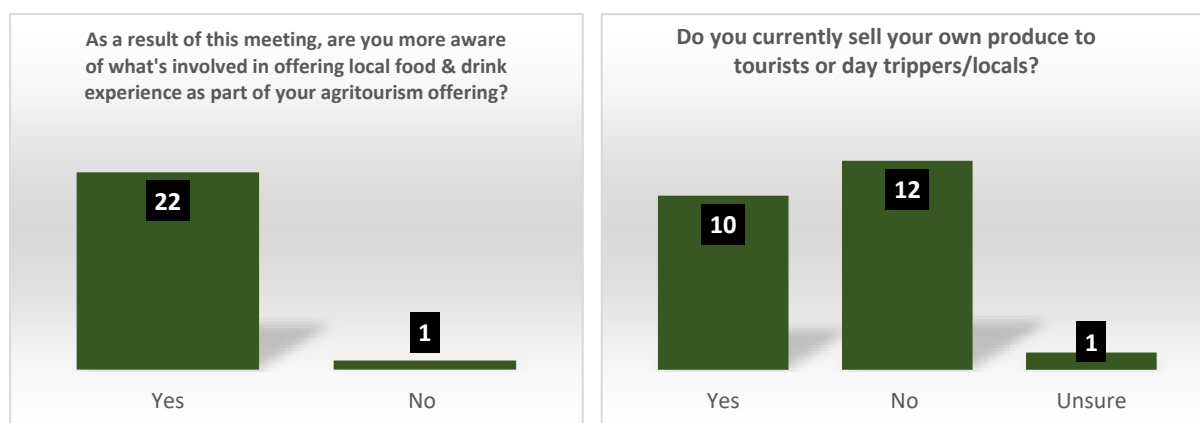
TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHING A FOOD TOURISM BUSINESS & PROMOTING LOCAL PRODUCE

[Click here](#) to here the full video of Sandra's top tips on establishing a food tourism business.

- Starting point = the customer and what they want to eat;
- Tell your food story – don't keep it a secret;
- **Menus;**
 - The most important marketing tool in your business (promote the farm/view/freshness);
 - Menus need to use your staff & equipment efficiently (great tool for managing costs);
 - Menus are read as a 'Z'. The first and last option on the menu is what people tend to remember;

- Use badges (Scotch beef PGI, Taste of Scotland etc.) and photography to draw customers attention;
- Offer two sizes of dish. Your smaller portions may cost less, but will probably bring in more revenue;
- Leave pound signs off the menu!!
- **Manage costs (Allacalc is a good costing tool which has a lot of different ingredients within the system that help to identify any allergy risks issues etc).**
 - Get to know suppliers/supply chain;
 - Don't over order;
 - Buy seasonally;
 - Check deliveries when they come in (weight, packaging, shelf life etc.);
 - Stocktaking (first in first out disciplines);
 - Portion control;
 - Standard recipes;
 - Waste recording (write it down and monitor). DRIFT. have started to ask customers if they would like butter/jam with their scones to reduce waste;
 - Do the same with salad garnish etc.
 - Staff training;
 - They are key to selling your message. Make sure they know the main; ingredients/traditions/special touches that go into the food you serve. They need to be passionate and sell the story;
- Social media – promote your business, who you work with (suppliers), photos of dishes, specials etc.
- Partnership working – team up with your local butcher etc. and help promote each other;
- Use traditional recipes with a twist (local/national/family dishes but add your own unique twist);
- Environmental Health Officer/Health (EHO) & Safety etc. – They are your friends!
 - EHO are now very strict at looking into where your ingredients come from and will check;
 - They are legally obliged to do this;
 - Work with your local EHO and keep in regular contact.

BUSINESS FEEDBACK



If yes, please state what you are offering and how it is going

- Café selling coffee/lunches/brunches;
- Flour – going very well;
- Lamb, mutton, and hogget direct from farm locally – a bit of interest but potential to expand;
- Hereford beef – going well. Visitors love being able to see how our product is reared;
- Organic beef – very small scale, only to guests staying on the farm;
- Meatboxes – good, logistics is most difficult part;

- Highland Beef; Blackface lamb; Blackface mutton – Not selling on a regular basis;
- Equestrian/walks – locals and tourists, getting footfall is difficult and ideas;
- Expansion;
- Homemade jam; looking at soup – not selling, include in offering;
- Café, food, ready meals, tours, presents and clothing.

If no, please state the main barriers to doing so?

- Not in this field of work (agritourism consultancy/guide business);
- Not a producer;
- Time;
- Knowledge and experience;
- Costs.

What did you learn at the meeting?

- More about what interests me individually (agritourism consultancy/guide business);
- Managing business;
- Wholesalers are not always the answer;
- Importance and drawbacks of 'locals';
- Visit Scotland 'Taste our Best' strategy;
- Storytelling works;
- Cooksafe scheme;
- Challenges of running a food and drink business;
- Quality more important than locality although good to have both;
- Not as severely regulated as feared;
- EHO roles;
- Menus;
- Where to go for help;
- Reminder of legislation involved in food & drink business;
- Costings;
- Waste recordings.

What are the main issues you have round growing food and drink sales? (if any)

- Lack of footfall;
- Location;
- Distribution;
- Logistics of providing fresh meat on weekly basis;
- Knowledge and experience;
- Time;
- Marketing;
- The next step;
- Cost.

What should Stuart and Jo do to improve?

- Become more well-known;
- Increase size of premises and storage;
- Very competent already;
- Source local suppliers where practical and tell story;
- More focus on locals;
- Costings;
- Sharing platters/special boards/promotions to test before putting on menu.

What did you enjoy about the meeting?

- Meeting people;
- Good balance of talks and group discussion;
- Informal style;
- Content (informative and relevant);
- Frank discussions;
- Working in groups;
- Learning about catering to the public;
- Speaker (Sandra Reid).

EAST MEETING FOUR ATTENDEES

There were 29 attendees (one that did not wish to have their information shared) at the meeting on 1st October 2019, including speakers, industry leaders/organisations.

No.	First Name	Surname	Ticket Type	Company	Website
1	Stuart	McNicol	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	DRIFT./Castleton Events	
2	Jo	McNicol	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	DRIFT./Castleton Events	
3	Sandra	Reid	Guest Speaker	Fare Consulting	
4	Andrew	Gauldie	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	??	
5	Jamie	Landale	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	Crieff Food Company	http://www.thecriefffoodco.co.uk/
6	Robin	Austin	Agritourism business	Barstobrick and Fellend Farm	https://www.barstobrick.co.uk/
7	Ellen	Austin	Agritourism business	Barstobrick and Fellend Farm	https://www.barstobrick.co.uk/
8	Balfour	Stewart	Agritourism business	The Busstop	https://www.thebusstop.scot/
9	Lucy	Wilson	Agritourism business	JRB Wilson & Sons	http://www.fluffymoos.com/
10	Louise	Urquhart	Agritourism business	Louise's Farm Kitchen	https://www.louisesfarmkitchen.com/
11	Chris	Scott-Park	Agritourism business	Portnellan Farm LLP	http://portnellanfarm.co.uk/
12	Louise	Nicol	Agritourism business	Newton Farm Tours	https://newtonfarmholidays.co.uk/
13	Jasmine	Jackson	Agritourism business	Kersheugh	https://www.facebook.com/jacksonsfarmventure/
14	Angus	McDowall	Agritourism Business	Mungowells	https://www.mungowells.co.uk/
15	Shelia	Henderson	Agritourism Business		
16	Sally	Williams	Farmer looking to diversify	R & A Wilson Ltd	
17	Ruth	Wilson	Farmer looking to diversify	R & A Wilson Ltd	
18	Nicolas	Poett	Farmer looking to diversify		
19	Shona	Duncan	Farmer looking to diversify	Duncan Family Farms	
20	Eric	Linklater	Farmer looking to diversify	G Gibsons & sons	
21	Trudi	Cueto	Farmer looking to diversify	G Gibson & Son	
22	Helene	Sinclair	Industry Leader/Organisation	Visit Scotland	https://www.visitscotland.com
23	Janie	Neumann	Industry Leader/Organisation/Speaker	Visit Scotland	https://www.visitscotland.com
24	Rachel	Gambro	Industry Leader/Organisation	Weave Consultant	
25	Kirsty	Scott	Industry Leader/Organisation	Weave Consultant	
26	Benjamin	Carey	Industry Leader/Organisation	Carey Tourism	https://www.hutton.ac.uk
27	Julie	Scanlon	Industry Leader/Organisation	East Lothian Food & Drink	https://www.scotlandsfooddrinkcounty.com/
28	Rebecca	Muir	Industry Leader/Organisation	East Lothian Food & Drink	https://www.scotlandsfooddrinkcounty.com/

APPENDIX 1 - Update on DRIFT.

- Stuart and Jo always had a desire to do something within the food & drink industry;
 - o Passionate about food;
 - o Wanted to have a way to allow Jo to come back and work within the business;
- Originally applied for planning on 2008 but never succeeded due to set backs with permission etc.;
- Café finally opened in June 2018. Small café built from old shipping containers on the edge of cliffs on the family farm's land;
 - o Brilliant views across to Fife and to the Bass rock;
 - o 1 ½ miles out of North Berwick (footpath the whole way);
- Started small, but in the 15 months of being open DRIFT. has expanded (kitchen, washing set up etc.);
- DRIFT. is now a 'destination';
 - o People travelling from Glasgow, Stirling, Northumberland, Central belt etc. to visit (by train, car);
- Everything they produce within the café is homemade;
 - o Now started introducing soup/brunch options;
 - o Takes longer to prepare due to it all being homemade but staff explain and customers all happy with this.

APPENDIX 2 - GROUP FEEDBACK

What is local?

- 50-mile radius?
- Customers think local is cheaper (or some may think the opposite). Public have very little knowledge on what is local, and the time taken to produce food;
- What **IS** important is the provenance/story not necessarily if its local (e.g. free-range eggs etc.);
- Local produce can bring lots more to the area (e.g. if you support a local business it can help the community, provide employment, bring more visitors to the area);

Is local important and what could DRIFT. do to support more local businesses?

- Good to have some local producers but not necessarily all;
- Weather/environment makes it hard to access local produce all year round;
- Buy local sundries (doesn't all have to be food & drink). Toiletries such as soap etc. could all be bought locally;
- Local can be defined in many different ways so DRIFT. should decided what is 'local' to them (is it national, regional?);
- Some local producers could be more expensive than others so break down the costs and work out what is justifiable;
- Local isn't always best. If its an Aberdeenshire product being sold in the borders, is it really a bad thing?

What other aspects need to come into to storytelling?

- DRIFT. is a special story in itself, so they should promote their uniqueness more;
- Good relationships with your suppliers (whether they are local or not) and keep them involved within the business;
- Bring suppliers to meet with customers and vice versa;
- Air miles (something could be produced locally but food miles could still be high depending on where its packaged etc.);
- Environmental – waste etc. all becoming very important to customers;
- Word of mouth is a great story for the business. Encourage visitors to share their experience of DRIFT.