



FEED YOUR **AMBITION**

Skills Action Plan for the Food Supply Chain



1 Alderson, J., Jassi, S., Pearson, A (2011) United Kingdom Food Supply Chain. York: Improve Sector Skills Council. <http://improveltd.co.uk/england/industry-report/uk-food-supply-chain-report>

2 Foresight (2011) The Future of Food and Farming. Government - Final Project Report. London: The Government Office for Science. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bispartners/foresight/docs/food-and-farming/11-546-future-of-food-and-farming-report.pdf>

Full details of the Food Supply Chain Action Plan are available at: www.igd.com

The Food Supply Chain Action Plan has been sponsored by Defra and led by Improve the Sector Skills Council for Food and Drink Manufacturing (authored by Sukvinder Jassi). The Action Plan was developed by a steering group of representatives from businesses, industry bodies and skills organisation partners and a range of contributors from every aspect of the Food Supply Chain.

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FOREWORD

BY DEFRA MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD, JIM PAICE MP, FOR THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN SKILLS ACTION PLAN



I very much welcome the publication of this Skills Action Plan for the Food Supply Chain. The Plan will make an important contribution to driving forward the essential task of improving workforce skills across the entire food chain, particularly focusing on where collaborative action can add value. It builds on the findings of the *United Kingdom Food Supply Chain*¹ report published in May.

This Action Plan does something not done before: it brings together a number of issues and identifies concrete actions from across the Food Supply Chain to address them. It highlights the skills shortages that the industry faces, and shows how these can be tackled.

I strongly believe, as I know the industry does, that the skills, and the development and encouragement of the right skills, is vital for the industry's success. Key to this is for the whole of the Food Supply Chain to work together. This Plan is a good example of this collaboration between the Sector Skills Councils, Government and industry.

Sustainable growth is essential if the economy is to address the challenges ahead. These challenges have been highlighted by *The Future of Food and Farming*² report, exploring as it did the pressures that the global food system will be under over the next forty years and the challenges we will all face in terms of food security.

Jim Paice,
Minister of State for Agriculture and Food

SKILLS ACTION PLAN FOR THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The UK Food Supply Chain involves some of the country's best-known brands and businesses. Together they contribute an annual turnover of £412 billion to the national economy and provide jobs for 3.7 million people – making the Food Supply Chain the country's biggest employer.

But in a competitive global economy, the Food Supply Chain needs to be more productive, more profitable and more attractive as a career choice so that it can build on its success and take full advantage of the potential for growth.

Everyone agrees that a better skills' base is fundamental to ensuring our food supply system remains secure, commercially competitive, innovative, healthy and sustainable. But in the past, organisations in different parts of the UK Food Supply Chain - from farm to manufacturing and processing and from distribution to retail and restaurants - often worked in isolation which resulted in a diluted effort.

Now, for the first time, employers and skills support organisations from industries across the Food Supply Chain have come together to agree on common skills' concerns and deliver a collective action plan around the skills' challenges we face.

THE RESULT IS

FEED YOUR AMBITION - THE SKILLS ACTION PLAN FOR THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The central theme of the plan is the promotion of jobs in the varied and dynamic businesses that make the Food Supply Chain an attractive career option for young people with talent, ambition and a willingness to learn.

Historically, jobs in businesses in the Food Supply Chain have not been seen as a first choice career option. Despite efforts by different groups and industries to provide more information about career opportunities, it still suffers from a negative image - particularly among young people and the parents and teachers who influence their study and work choices.

Under the new Action Plan, careers promotion across the Food Supply Chain is now welded together in common cause. Through collaboration and partnership, existing initiatives will be more visible and have more impact.

During the next 18 months, employers, industry bodies and skills organisations representing every aspect of the Food Supply Chain will be supporting practical action to improve people's perception of jobs available in all sectors within the supply chain.

Feed Your Ambition will promote a concerted effort to radically increase the number of new entrants of all ages either applying for jobs in Food Supply Chain businesses, embarking on relevant training or opting to study food-related courses. It will:

- increase understanding about the range of career opportunities on offer and provide a common focus for existing outreach activity;
- improve the perception of jobs and careers across the Food Supply Chain; and
- motivate new entrants of all ages to get on board by challenging ill-informed and outdated views about pay, working conditions, job security and opportunities to progress.

In particular, Feed Your Ambition will join up and focus the activity of a range of existing and new outreach programmes for schools fostered by different parts of the Food Supply Chain.

By combining the efforts of Ambassador programmes in schools, the Feed Your Ambition message will:

- reach over 60,000 14-to-16 year-olds at more than 800 UK schools over the next 18 months promoting a joined up message about careers in the Food Supply Chain.

The message will be backed by high quality research into the drivers behind the career choices of today's school and college leavers and the information and guidance necessary for them to consider a position within the Food Supply Chain.

Changing the perceptions of potential new entrants is no overnight task. Feed Your Ambition has also considered what we can do right here, right now.

The outcome is an across-the-board commitment to:

- create 50,000 Apprenticeship training opportunities in companies within Agriculture and Primary Production, Food and Drink Manufacturing and Processing, Food Retail and Hospitality and Catering.

The commitment is underpinned by a range of new and existing pledges by employers. These include employer signatories to the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) Employability Pledge which aims to provide over 25,000 Apprenticeship opportunities during this period and a new pledge from employer members of the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) who have pledged to double the number of Apprenticeships on offer. These new "earn and learn" opportunities will be launched between July 2011 and December 2012.

To help Food Supply Chain businesses put them in place, industry support organisations like Sector Skills Councils and the National Apprenticeship Service have likewise vowed to ease the bureaucracy particularly for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) within the Food Supply Chain.

Support organisations will provide better information about the business benefits of Apprenticeships for businesses of all sizes along with guidance on the operational flexibility afforded by different Apprenticeship models matched to business needs.

If you would like more information about this campaign please contact the relevant Sector Skills Council or Trade Association.



PAUL GRIMWOOD, CHAIRMAN OF THE FDF COMPETITIVENESS STEERING GROUP AND ALSO CE AND CHAIRMAN OF NESTLE.

"The Food Supply Chain is taking positive action to attract well qualified and ambitious candidates into our industry. This is critical to our future sustainability, innovation and growth. FDF has been working through its 'Taste Success – A Future in Food' campaign to improve the image of the industry as a career choice but as sectors of the supply chain are co-dependent on each other, we need to work in partnership to deliver better outcomes. The Food Supply Chain Action Plan will help to maximise the impact of individual campaigns across all of the sectors and actively promote the full extent of career opportunities to potential new entrants."