

Unit 305: Sustainability in professional kitchens

Handout 6: Sustainability in the kitchen – food and drink



A growing population puts increasing pressure on the earth's finite resources. Sustainability is about finding ways of providing food that will last for future generations and have less of an impact on the environment.

To achieve sustainability, food should be sourced locally wherever possible, to minimise the energy used in production, transport and storage. It must also support farmers, sustainable agriculture and local communities, and give farmers in developing countries a fairer deal. Minimising packaging and food waste is also key.

Sustainable operating practices include using tap water not branded bottled water where possible. It is estimated that 1 billion people in the world don't have access to safe drinking water, 2.5 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services and four children die every minute as a result of water-related illnesses. Hotels and restaurants with a growing social conscience are eliminating bottled water from the menu and donating profits to help fund access to sanitary tap water in the developing world.

The business benefits of sustainable sourcing are:

- **Economic** as restaurants and hotels will continue to come under increasing pressure from customers, regulators, investors and tour operators to employ green procurement policies.
- **Reduced operating costs** through bulk buying from local suppliers, demanding reduced packaging, buying seasonally, etc. If you grow your own produce, costs can be cut even more dramatically.
- **Improved quality of food** and service from suppliers as hotels improve relationships with suppliers. They will also reduce the environmental and health risks, and avoid the negative publicity associated with purchasing “problem products”.

Tips:

1. Look at what you are currently sourcing, create some measurable standards and calculate your current purchases. This sets a baseline that a restaurant can evaluate against when creating goals, which is the next step.
2. Decide what you wish to accomplish, which could be a number of different things, from sourcing local organic products to growing your own herbs and vegetables or perhaps using only sustainable seafood on your menu.
3. With goals set, create a plan of action, including a budget and a timeline. “I recommend going slowly, adding products and suppliers one at a time, and being flexible when creating a sustainable purchasing policy,” he says. “More than likely things will not go as planned, so purchasers should be ready to adapt.”

Reference: Adapted from: <https://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/community-communication-engagement/sustainability-in-the-kitchen-food-drink/> July 27, 2010