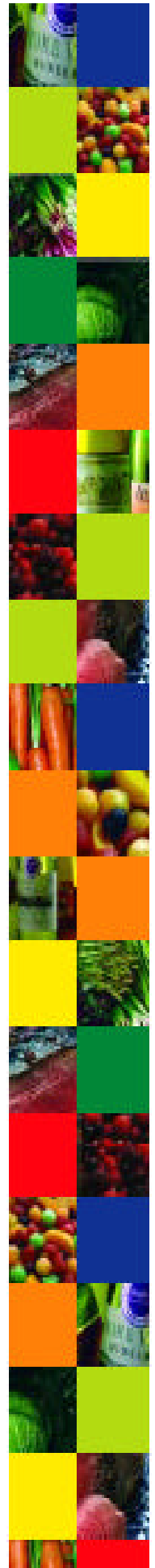




Extending Regional Hospitality



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2: SOURCING REGIONAL FOOD AND DRINK

“Discovering the quality and diversity of locally distinctive food and drink has enabled these businesses to create a dining experience that is unique to their location.”

Shaun Hill, Merchant House, Ludlow –
foreword of Heart Of England excellence awards brochure

More and more chefs are turning to using local produce on their menus, increasingly bars are using locally produced drinks, English wines have become a viable alternative to other countries in the last few years. The use of locally grown products attract customers and finding the right supplier for your business is a big decision. “National figures indicate that a wide range of products are available. Meat products are the most significant, accounting for 25% of product availability.” Flair - Food and Local Agriculture Information Service.

In this section you will:

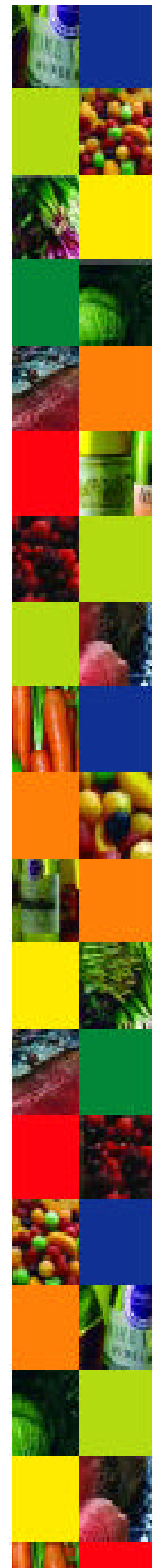
- Decide why you want to buy locally
- Identify how to find a local supplier
- Find out how to choose the right supplier for you
- Use a checklist of website sources to find suppliers local to you

■ Why do you want to find local suppliers?

“As a chef it’s far more interesting to source our ingredients locally to meet the people producing it and put together a menu together which reflects the regionality and what’s available from the West Midlands.”

Stuart Philips, Hundred House Hotel, Shifnal

The basis of building this partnership with a local supplier is one of trust and commitment. You need to consider why you want to source locally and find a supplier who has similar objectives. If you are working at cross purposes with each other the relationship will not work as successfully as it could e.g. if all a supplier is interested in is how quickly you will pay and you want to discuss consistency of quality in the product then the relationship is not on the same wavelength. Someone’s principles will be compromised somewhere along the line.



Decide your objectives for buying local produce.

- ◆ Do you want to gradually incorporate local food and monitor how it sells with a view to increasing in time? *or*
- ◆ Are you transforming the menu altogether? *or*
- ◆ Are you intending to introduce a house speciality base on regional cooking?

The Stagg at Titley winner of Heart of England Food excellence awards - best restaurant sourcing local produce - judges writing -

“... we are eyeing the progress of the 2002 best British cheeseboard – The Stagg Inn won over all the other entrants because of its excellent range of well described and deliciously ripe, mainly local cheeses Local? Try “Finn: hand made locally in the village of Dorstone by Charlie Westhead and named after his dog.”

Behind the bar you may find traditional ales, brewed locally by Hobson’s brewery, Dunkertons Traditional Cider and Perry and Ralph’s Radnor Cider. For the driver, single variety apple juice from PJ’s of Pembridge.”

■ EXERCISE:

Be honest! – what are your principles behind ‘going local’? (increasing sales is a good thing – don’t miss it out!) Identify your business objectives or direction in terms of buying local foods and drink.

■ How to find a local supplier

Sourcing local suppliers may initially need more time and work more than popping down to the local cash and carry but long term it will build local relationships which are of benefit to your business and the locality.

■ EXAMPLE local supplier

In 1971 an experimental fifty vines were planted by the founder, Keith James, with an additional five hundred Reichensteiner vines the following year, continuing until the expansion programme was completed and covered seventeen acres of Broadfield's finest south-facing slopes. The vines which have proved to flourish best include Huxelrebe, Mueller-Thurgau, Seyve Villard and Madeline Angevine as well as the original Reichensteiner. After the grapes are processed, the pure juice is siphoned into Broadfield's own vats where it is fermented and bottled the following year. Maturing well in the bottle, the wines settle down after the first few months and continue to develop over a number of years, to be ranked today with the best traditions of elegant English wines.

Broadfield Court Estate, Bowley Lane ,Bodenham, Herefordshire, HR1 3LG.

If you have completed the exercise in section 1 on the supply chain you would already have considered areas which you might like to find local sources for. However in carrying out research on the ideas listed below you may come across something that you had not thought of before. Be open to ideas.

There are many sources to find supplier names including:

- ◆ Telephone and business directories
- ◆ Local associations e.g. Farmers Association, Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ County associations e.g. Heart of England
- ◆ Food fairs/festivals etc. e.g. Ludlow Marches Food festival
- ◆ National associations e.g. Guild of fine food retailers
- ◆ Local paper articles and adverts – a business might advertise every so often or have an article written about it or be part of a special feature
- ◆ Local health and 'natural' shops
- ◆ Produce leaflets and fliers – these might 'fall' out of the local paper, be sent to you direct etc – especially be aware of 'pick your own' fliers
- ◆ Trade press – *Caterer & Hotelkeeper* etc
- ◆ Food magazines – from TV cookery programmes, supermarkets etc
- ◆ Websites (if you don't have a computer in your business use a local internet café or library) - associations usually have both websites and literature e.g. www.ourlocalfood.co.uk – you can order on line and they deliver direct to your business and charge the supplier
- ◆ Press releases
- ◆ Information sheets in supermarkets and libraries

EXERCISE:

Identify four methods of finding local suppliers that are applicable to your business. Define the action you have taken within this method and write down a supplier that is interesting for you and any key points about that supplier (this could tie in with your reasons for buying local produce).

Method	Action	Findings
Leaflet	Heart of England fine foods	Detton Beef and Lamb "sell our own home produced beef and lamb which is well hung, tender and full of flavour. Handmade speciality sausages, beef, beef, tomato and onion, beef and horseradish, beef and mustard, lamb."

"The restaurant has a prestigious Two Rosette Food Award from the AA, but, more importantly, the food is healthy, sourced locally as far as possible, and increasingly tends to the use of organic produce."

Pen y dyffryn Country House Hotel, Oswestry

■ Factors in choosing the right supplier for you

Notoriously the relationship between buyer and supplier can be negative – the buyer wants one thing the supplier can only achieve another. To be positive the aim is to achieve the best competitive edge for both parties.

The advantage of a local supplier is that you can go and see them on their premises. This means you can gain greater knowledge of their work processes. Seeing your contacts face to face in the workplace can also help build relationships between yourselves as greater understanding of work principles and objectives is achieved and friendships develop.

A meeting can help clarify what you want to achieve and how the supplier can help you achieve it.

■ Case study: Stuart Phillips at The Hundred House Hotel, Norton, near Shifnal

As the hotel is high profile a lot of suppliers call in on the off chance of a chat. The taste and quality of the product is the first hurdle but Stuart also considers other key aspects such as frequency of delivery, how much can be supplied – “if you use 10 heads of lettuce a day it could wipe all of a small producers stock in one week”. Cost is also a key factor as ultimately the hotel has to make its margins.

Stuart feels that menu flexibility is important when sourcing locally. A specials menu which changes daily or weekly can easily reflect the smaller amounts available from small producers whereas a rigid long term menu can sometimes be more difficult for a smaller producer to maintain the volume levels. You’ve got to work from the point of view of the supplier and constantly think “what’s available next week?” rather than “what do I need this morning?”

It’s important to build a strong relationship with both sides showing flexibility to achieve the best result possible.

Questions:

- ◆ How do you respond to being called or visited by local producers?
- ◆ How flexible are you to respond to the possibility of using local produce?
- ◆ What actions can you take to build a 2 way relationship with local suppliers?

EXERCISE:

Identify a product you are sourcing locally and compile a checklist of points you would be looking for or wish to discuss.

Product	What you are looking for from the supplier	Factors to consider Examples – cross out what doesn't apply to your identified produce	Add your points or comments to the checklist
	Quality of product	Colour Texture Crispness Meat marbling Shelf life Freshness	
	Quantity of product	How much can be supplied at one time Frequency of level of supply Flexibility if demand increased or decreased	
	Delivery	Timing Flexibility 'Urgent' supplies Temperature of van Packaging	
	Price / Payment	Discounts for large orders When payment required Process for returns / rejects	
	Production	Hygiene Health & safety procedures Risk assessment Due diligence Quality of any 'chain' supplier Ethical applications	
	Business	Stability of the business What are their long term goals? Are their business objectives similar to yours? Who else do they supply? What quality marks gained? What are their expansion plans and planning processes? How do they develop themselves and their staff? How keep up to date?	

Always ensure:

- There is genuine commitment on both sides.
- Establish a good understanding of what is wanted out of the relationship on both sides.
- Make sure that if you are not the person who has daily contact with the chosen supplier that you communicate how the relationship is to be developed and handled or if you are not there.
- Be flexible – initially in the relationship there may be problems and ultimately we are all human, mistakes happen – one day it will be the supplier the next time it might be the mistake of your business!
- Building trust is the key to a good buyer and supplier relationship.
- Get written commitment – this ensures the responsibilities from both sides are clearly defined from the start and can help solve any problems later.

■ What quality marks might a supplier hold?

A quality mark would give you a guide that the supplier has been assessed in methods of productions and quality of product. This means that you can buy with the confidence that the product is grown or produced the way the supplier says it is grown and that your principles for buying local are secure.

As customers become more ‘food’ aware, they ask more questions about the reliability of food and drink and being able to show that quality marking is a basic principle of your buying procedures would not only build customer confidence but could also attract other people to your business.

Here are some examples:



Red Tractor/Farm Assurance Schemes

The ‘British Farm Standard’, recognisable by its red tractor logo, is a voluntary quality assurance scheme developed by the National Farmers’ Union. The scheme is now run by Assured Food Standards. When the red tractor logo is shown on a food, it means the food meets the requirements of specific farm quality assurance schemes that have been registered with Assured Food Standards. www.littleredtractor.org.uk



Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity and enrich society and culture.



The **Soil Association** standards cover all aspects of farm management to ensure a sound and sustainable organic farming system. www.soilassociation.org



Members of **The Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society**, Pedigree Herd No.
www.aberdeenangus.com



HACCP is a systematic science based process for identifying risk points in the process chain and for developing effective controls to minimise any contamination risks during the production process



This scheme is specific to the British meat industry. Regular audits ensure compliance to exacting standards. These include identification and traceability, farm animal management, environment and hygiene management, feed composition, storage and use, housing and handling facilities and medicines and veterinary treatment. The FABBL Farm Assurance Scheme was set up in 1992 to provide a farm assurance scheme, to give retailers and consumers confidence in British livestock production standards.

From 1st November 2003 **FABBL Farm Assurance** has merged with EFSIS in a move to deliver improved benefits to FABBL's existing members. It now offers farmers and growers the chance to combine multi-enterprise inspections (with some exceptions) to save both time and paperwork



Freedom Food is the RSPCA's farm assurance and food labelling scheme, set up by the RSPCA in 1994. The aim of the scheme is simple - to improve the lives of as many farm animals as possible. It works towards this by implementing the RSPCA species specific welfare standards on farms, hauliers and abattoirs across the country. These practical standards apply to both indoor and outdoor systems, as long as they meet the requirements. www.rspca.org.uk



EFSIS is the premier third party independent inspection service, providing retailers, manufacturers and caterers, throughout the world, with expert inspection of their operations and suppliers to ensure only the highest standards are maintained. These range from accredited inspection of food premises to ISO 9000 system audits to HACCP certification and beyond.



The Vegetarian Society seedling symbol was first registered as an official trademark in 1969. By the early 1980s, with the considerable growth in vegetarianism, the seedling symbol was becoming more actively sought out. Food manufacturing companies were also beginning to realise the potential of using the symbol on their range of products. Many manufacturers wanted to use The Vegetarian Society seedling symbol, believing their products to be vegetarian. Closer inspection would often reveal that such products contained non-vegetarian ingredients, animal fats or additives. This resulted in the creation of the first set of official Vegetarian Society guidelines concerning the usage of the symbol. www.vegsoc.org

■ EXERCISE:

Pick 10 key products you use and check the quality marks against the list above.

Product	Quality marks	What other marks would you like to have?

What other quality marks might you use?

■ EXAMPLE website sources

www.ourlocalfood.co.uk

www.regionalfoodanddrink.co.uk

www.finefoodworld.co.uk

www.foodfirst.co.uk

www.heff.co.uk

www.littleredtractor.org.uk

www.soilassociation.org

www.vegsoc.org

www.bodenham-english-wines.co.uk

Astley vineyards 01299 822907

Bodenham English Wines – 01568 797483

Coddington vineyard 01531 640668

All these vineyards are on the Wine Trail - Heart of England Fine foods

■ EXERCISE:

Choose one of the identified local suppliers in the previous exercise and arrange a meeting. Think through your questions and what you are looking for. Note them here to help you prepare.

■ Summary

- Sourcing local suppliers may initially need more time and work more than popping down to the local cash and carry but long term it will build local relationships which are of benefit to your business and the locality.
- A little time and effort spent in finding the right supplier will support both your business objectives and principles. Building a positive 2 way relationship from the start can save you and your supplier time and aggravation in the future.
- The advantage of a local supplier is that you can go and see them on their premises.
- Establish a good understanding of what is wanted out of the relationship on both sides.
- Get written commitment – this ensures the responsibilities from both sides are clearly defined from the start and can help solve any problems later.