

**BETTER  
FOOD  
TRADERS**

# WHAT I'M GOING TO COVER

- A bit about Growing Communities and the Better Food Traders
- Tell you all about our plans to expand the Better Food Traders Network and the funding bid we are about to submit to enable us to do that.
- Would love to get your comments and feedback



Staff: 25 part-time, 12 fte

Annual Turnover: £800,000



**Two main community-led retail outlets**  
30 farmers and processors,  
3500 people

**Veg Scheme**

**Farmers  
Market**



# COLLECTION SCHEME





Patchwork Farm (Micro scale urban production and training programme for growers)

## Our own food growing

Dagenham Farm (Larger covered site, outreach and training programme)



# START –UP PROGRAMME (10 TRADING GROUPS)

VegBox Kentish Town



Field to Fork

Crop Drop



Local Greens

# WHO ARE THE BETTER FOOD TRADERS



**BETTER  
FOOD  
TRADERS**

[Growing Communities](#), Hackney;

[Local Greens](#), Herne Hill;

[Windmill Community Gardens](#), Margate;

[Crop Drop](#), Haringey;

[Field to Fork Organics](#), Kensal Rise;

[Enfield Veg Co](#), Enfield;

[Kentish Town Veg Box](#), Kentish Town;

[Veg Box People](#), Manchester;

[Angel Greens](#), Islington;

[Lee Greens](#), Lewisham;

[Pennine Crop Share](#), Hebden Bridge

# **A BIT ABOUT WHAT MOTIVATES US. A TALE OF TWO FOOD SYSTEMS...**



**WE BELIEVE THAT  
SMALL TO MEDIUM  
SCALE ORGANIC AND  
AGROECOLOGICAL  
PRODUCERS HAVE A  
SIGNIFICANT PART TO  
PLAY IN IMPROVING  
THE SUSTAINABILITY  
OF OUR FOOD AND  
FARMING SYSTEM.**



## ➤ YIELDS <sup>1</sup>

Increasing evidence that they

- **support more<sup>2</sup> and better jobs<sup>3</sup>,**
- **sustain more biodiversity<sup>4</sup>,**
- **protect soils<sup>5</sup>,**
- **provide better animal welfare<sup>6</sup> and**
- **create more beneficial social impact<sup>7</sup>.**

<sup>1</sup> Some small-scale agroecological producers in the UK are producing double or triple the yields of standard non-organic farms. Laughton, R. (2017), [A Matter of Scale](#), Landworkers' Alliance and Centre for Agroecology at Coventry University, p.44 and chapter 5

<sup>2</sup> Small agroecological farms employ 26 times more people per hectare compared to the UK average, i.e. 0.68 full time workers per hectare ([Laughton 2017](#) p.26) compared to 0.026 (Eurostat, 2011 [Large Farm Statistics](#))

<sup>3</sup> Timmermann, C. and Felix, G. F. (2015) [Agroecology as a vehicle for contributive justice](#), *Agriculture and Human Values*; Winter, M. and Lobley, M. (2016) [Is there a future for the small family farm in the UK?](#) Prince's Countryside Fund p.43-47

<sup>4</sup> IPES-Food (2016) [From uniformity to diversity: a paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems](#), International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food systems, p.35

<sup>5</sup> [IPES Food 2016](#), p36.

<sup>6</sup> The Food Ethics Council & Pickett, H. (2014) [Farm Animal Welfare: Past, Present & Future](#), Food Ethics Council, p.30-31

<sup>7</sup> CPRE (2012) [From field to fork: The value of England's local food webs](#) CPRE; [Winter & Lobley 2016](#), p.4 & 40-47

# MEANWHILE, THE MAINSTREAM FOOD SYSTEM



**.... IS HEADING  
IN A DIFFERENT  
DIRECTION**

- Large-scale industrial monoculture - ‘efficiency’ and economies of scale.
- Automation can remove people from the equation entirely, or diminish the work experience to one more akin to modern slavery<sup>1</sup>.
- The heavy machinery and chemicals that enable it to work make it difficult to protect the soil and biodiversity and contribute significantly to the climate impact of agriculture<sup>2</sup>, the costs of which are not included into the price of food<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence, F. (2016) [The gangsters on England’s doorstep](#), *The Guardian*; IDMG (2017) [Modern slavery: a briefing for the agricultural sector](#), Home Office

<sup>2</sup> Lin, B. et al. (2011) [Effects of industrial agriculture on climate change and the mitigation potential of small-scale agro-ecological farms](#), *CAB Reviews: Perspectives in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Nutrition, and Natural Resources*

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Food Trust (2017) [The Hidden Cost of UK Food](#).



**20% 1960 – 90%**

**NO LONGER ACCOMMODATE SMALLER SCALE  
FARMING OPERATIONS OR SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS**

# IT'S A STRUGGLE TO COMPETE

- Food often costs more
- These producers bear the cost to the environment and public health that other actors in the food supply chain can externalise.
- Lack of government support makes the playing field still more uneven

# SO, DESPITE ALL THAT GREAT STUFF.....

## ➤ YIELDS <sup>1</sup>

Increasing evidence that they

- **support more<sup>2</sup> and better jobs<sup>3</sup>,**
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- **create more beneficial social impact<sup>7</sup>.**

**THE SMALL SCALE SUSTAINABLE FARMERS WE  
NEED MORE OF ARE BEING DRIVEN OUT OF  
BUSINESS.**

**.....WHERE THE BETTER FOOD TRADERS COME IN**



# BETTER FOOD TRADERS AIM TO:

- Provide the kind of farmer we need more of with alternative, secure routes to market that pay them the price needed to produce food sustainably and fairly.
- That in turn enables those farmers to produce food in a way that protects soils and biodiversity while providing decent pay and working conditions to agricultural workers.
- And it enables our community to access seasonal healthy food at a fair price
- And it enables us to create jobs and community here in the urban areas in which most of us are based.

**NOT EASY...BUT A WIN WIN**

# IN PRACTICE...BFTS FOCUS ON F&V AND HORTICULTURE

- Horticulture is the agricultural sector that as communities we can most easily **connect** with and directly **influence**: it is the farming sector that lends itself best to **supplying local markets**
- On the other hand, growers of fresh fruit and veg can *particularly* benefit from the Better Food Traders approach which includes **shortening supply chains** and supporting **seasonal consumption** while providing producers with **fair payment** and **consistency** of orders.
- Horticulture is also the area that we ourselves can most easily get **actively involved** with – as demonstrated by the increase in urban/peri-urban market gardening. The significant social benefits of this kind of production are increasingly clear alongside its potential to reconnect communities with their food.
- UK self-sufficiency in fruit and veg is low compared to cereals and livestock. Focussing on domestic horticulture provides a means to both **increase food security** and **reduce the climate impact of food**.
- Focussing on small scale organic systems can **support more good jobs**, attracting more domestic employees and entrepreneurs motivated by the meaningful, varied and skilled work
- And of course, the very significant links between increased consumption of fresh fruit and veg and **health**

**INCREASING TRADE IN FRESH FRUIT AND VEG VIA AGROECOLOGICAL SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS CAN DELIVER SIGNIFICANT AND MULTI-FACETED BENEFITS TO HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIVELIHOODS.**

**WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE ABOUT VEG?**



**AND VERY EXCITED BY THE LAUNCH**

# BACK TO OUR PLANS TO EXPAND THE BETTER FOOD TRADERS **NETWORK**

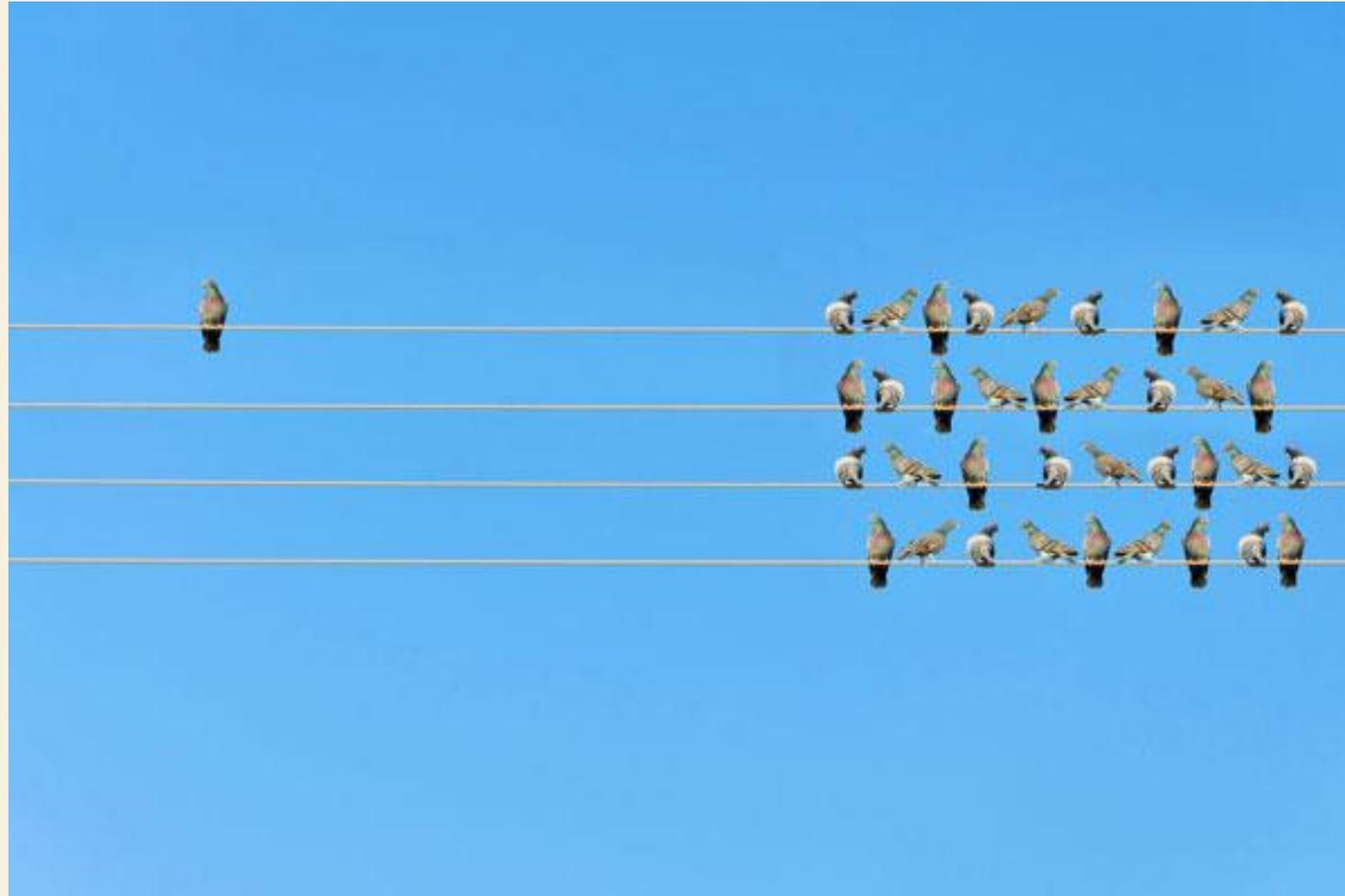
- Working in partnership with Sustain
- Want to discuss collaboration with:
  - SFC/Veg Cities
  - OFN, CSA network and Transition Network
  - And others?

# THERE'S A LOT OF GREAT STUFF GOING ON



and lots of other groups out there working along the same lines

# BUT... ISOLATED



# AND HARD TO FULLY DEMONSTRATE OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

*“...how can we promote with policy-makers the benefits of local food systems, direct sales, and the funding and infrastructure that needs to support these. I think this evidence and voice is seriously lacking in the agriculture consultation that Defra has live now.”*

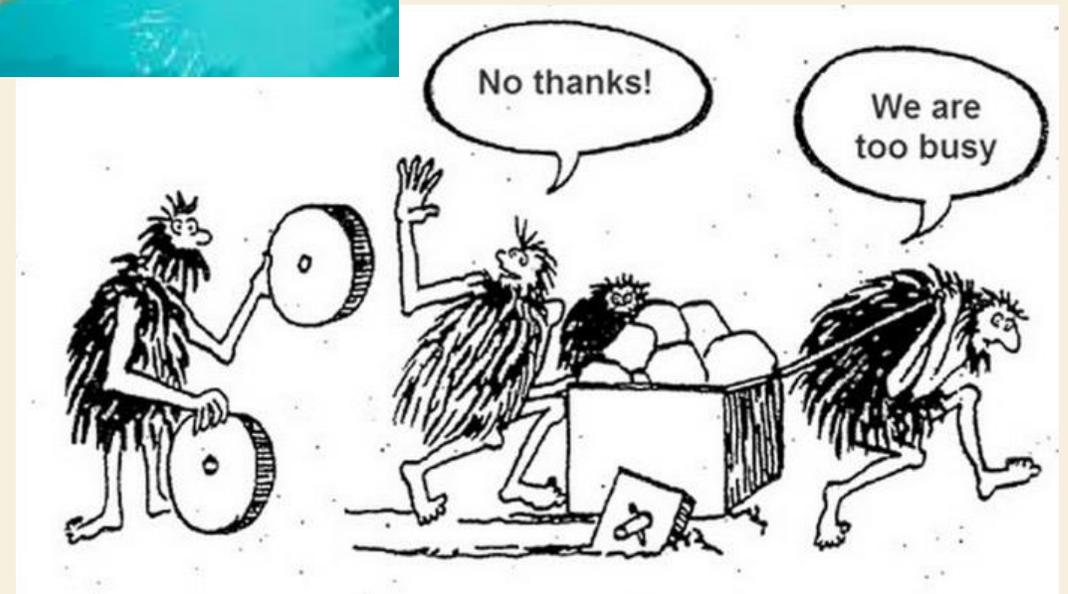
Kath Dalmeny, CEO of Sustain

# INSTEAD WE COULD BE

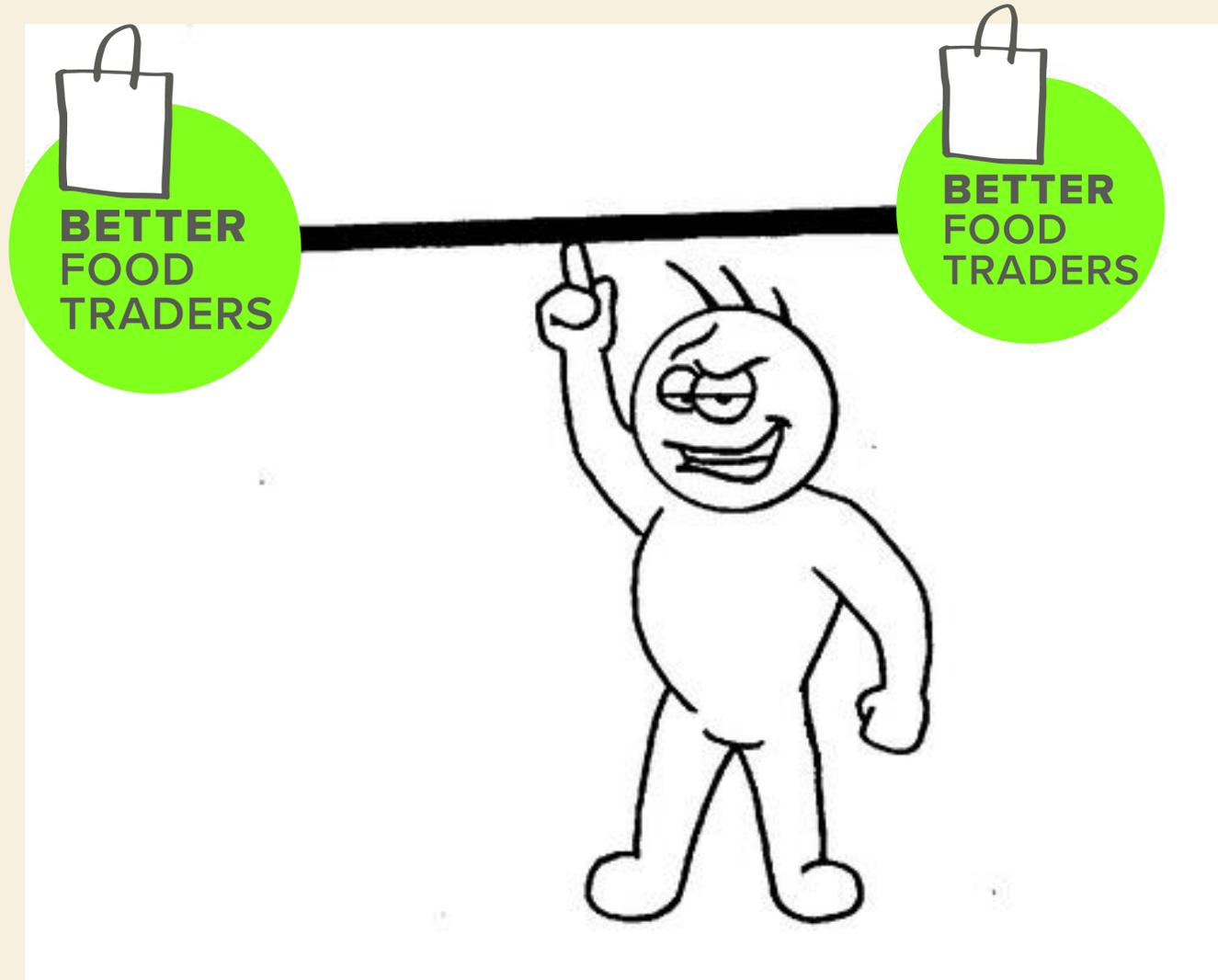
More of these



a little less of this



# AND DEVELOPING AND A STRONG COLLECTIVE IDENTITY



**So we can raise  
the profile of BFT  
and persuade  
more people to  
buy sustainable  
fresh fruit and veg**

# AND COLLECTING AND AGGREGATING DATA

➤ Help develop that strong collective identity,

➤ Demonstrate to policy makers the viability of the movement and the necessity to support the sustainable farmers and growers and trading systems that we need



# FUNDING BID

- **Better Food Traders:** build the network by inviting other enterprises on the ground to collaborate around a shared set of principles.
- Demonstrate impact and growth by **aggregating data** based on a common set of metrics.
- **Tell the BFT story:** developing its brand recognition and reach to consumers, producers and policy makers in order to Increase supply and demand for healthy and sustainable food.

# WHAT WE'LL BE OFFERING

- **Slack messaging platform** (moving to intranet over time) where groups share knowledge and expertise on a wide range of topics from marketing local food to how to source ecological packaging.
- Online **events**, webinars and eventually regional events where we can meet and share knowledge
- Access to **mentoring bank** of free hours of **bespoke advice** on a wide range of topics such as finance, marketing, logistics.
- To be part of a **collective movement** where together we **get more customers** and **demonstrate our collective impact**.

# WHAT WE'D WANT IN RETURN

**Will cost nothing to join** except a bit of time to...provide

- Information demonstrating that you're a Better Food Trader
- Annual return of information to enable us to demonstrate the ongoing impact and growth of the network

# **THREE THINGS YOU COULD DO THAT WOULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE**

1. Can you help us identify a Better Food Trader in your area or network?
2. Would you help persuade them to join the BFT network?
3. Could you encourage everyone in your network/group to buy food from them?

**If you can't identify one, are you interested in helping to get one up and running? We can help with that too!**

# SO OVER TO YOU

➤ Any Questions?

➤ What do you think about...

The concept of Better Food Traders

What you get when you join the network (the offer)

The Three Things You Could do:

1. help us identify a Better Food Trader in your area or network
2. help persuade them to join the BFT network
3. Encourage everyone in your network/group to buy food from them?