

The London Hospital Food Project



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The London Hospital Food Project

- Four Hospitals:

- Royal Brompton – relatively small, specialist heart and lung unit
- Ealing – general hospital
- Lambeth Hospital – mental health unit
- St Georges – large teaching hospital



Context

- A range of catering types:
 - 'In house'
 - Contracted out to large companies
 - 'Cook-chill' meals
 - Freshly prepared
- Large proportion of imported ingredients
- No organic sourcing

Aims of the Hospital Food Project:

- 10% of the Hospital's routine catering provision as local and or organic within two years (by December 2005)
- To improve the health of staff and patients by providing more fresh and nutritious food
- To improve viability of local economies by providing new business

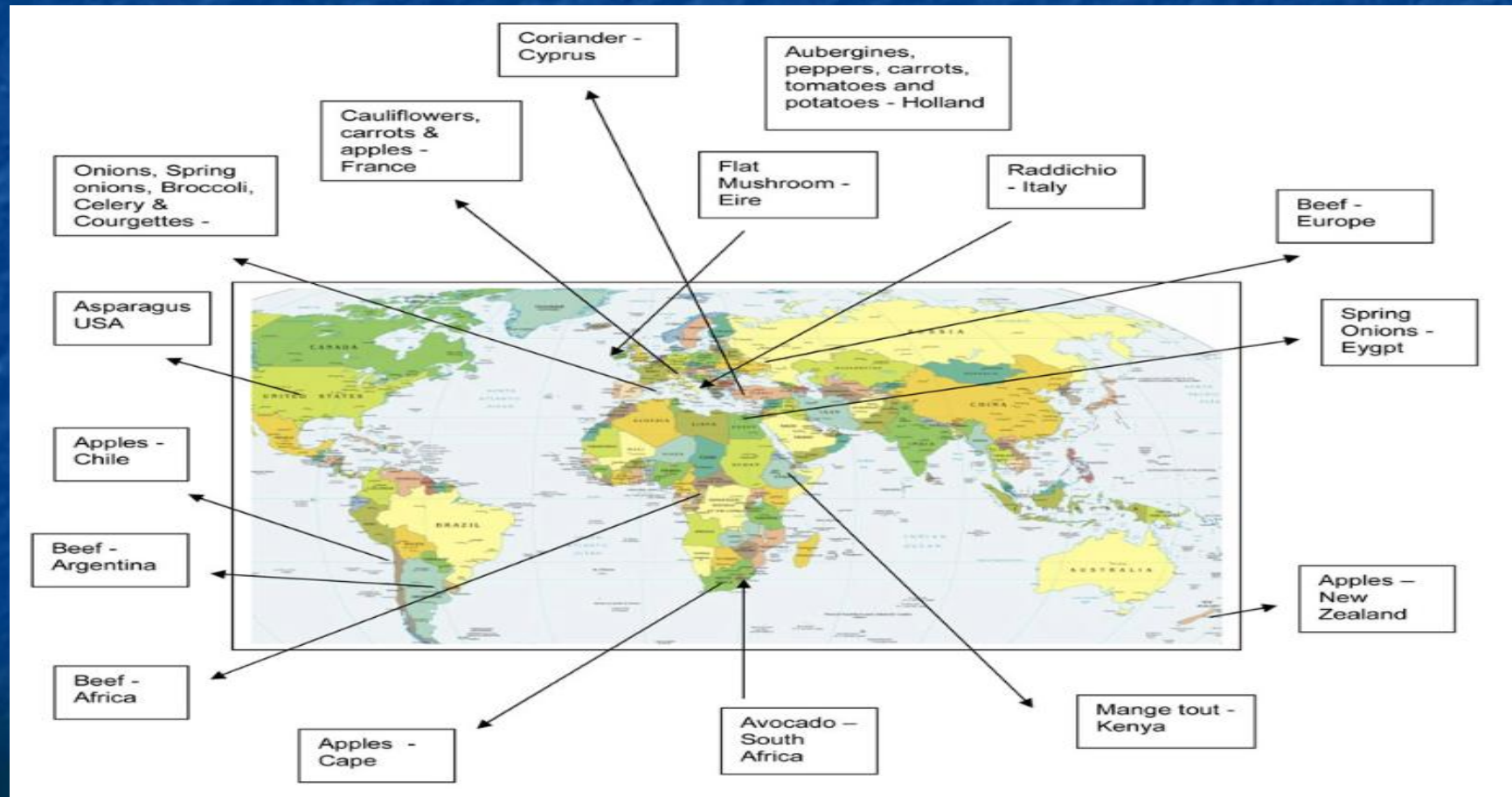


Why Sustainable Sourcing?

- The NHS as a good corporate citizen – government policy includes aims for sustainable procurement
- Procuring high quality food to gain value for money in the *long term*:
 - Supporting Local Economies by sourcing locally
 - Highlighting the link between food and health within the trusts.
 - Environmental benefits such as reduced transport and congestion



Sourcing before the project began:



Policy

- The Government's Strategy for sustainable food and farming - aiming for a:
 - 'competitive and efficient farming and food sector'
 - Contributes to the health and prosperity of communities
- White Paper 'choosing health'
 - Including health in workplace catering
 - Encouragement to look beyond price in deciding on food types – to look at wider benefits
- Task Force - Sustainable Procurement

NHS Food Sourcing

- Current NHS expenditure on food is around £500 million per annum
- Over 300 million meals are served each year, including:
 - 12.3 million loaves of bread, and 61 million litres of milk
 - The average spending on food and beverages per patient day is £2.75

Impacts for staff

- Food in hospitals is likely to affect the nutritional health of hospital staff as much as patients:
- The NHS employs 900,000 staff in England,
- Around 45% of NHS staff earn £15,000 or under, and around 14% earn less than £10,000.
- Raising awareness of healthy eating, seasonal, fresh food etc.
- Possibilities for using extra income earned in canteens to support patient meals.

Developments in the Hospitals

- Altering suppliers to those who are willing to source local/organic produce
- Changing menus to include sustainable produce, and including information on why this is being done
- Developing relationships with a range of producers/suppliers
- Gaining support within the trusts



Strategies employed:

- Utilising seasonal produce
- Using smaller amounts of higher quality meat (lower amounts of fat & water run-off)
- Using longer term contracts
- Cutting out 'middlemen'
- Using co-operative groups

Gaining Internal backing

- Explaining and promoting the project to all levels within the trust E.g.
 - Internal media –such as intranet and magazines
 - Working with other departments such as dietetics
 - Developing promotional activities and events
 - Supplying posters, leaflets, on-table ‘tent cards’



PASA

- Using PASA developed contracts wherever possible
- Adding suppliers in to the ‘second tier’ of the supply chain
- Using internal quality assurance checks when creating new contracts

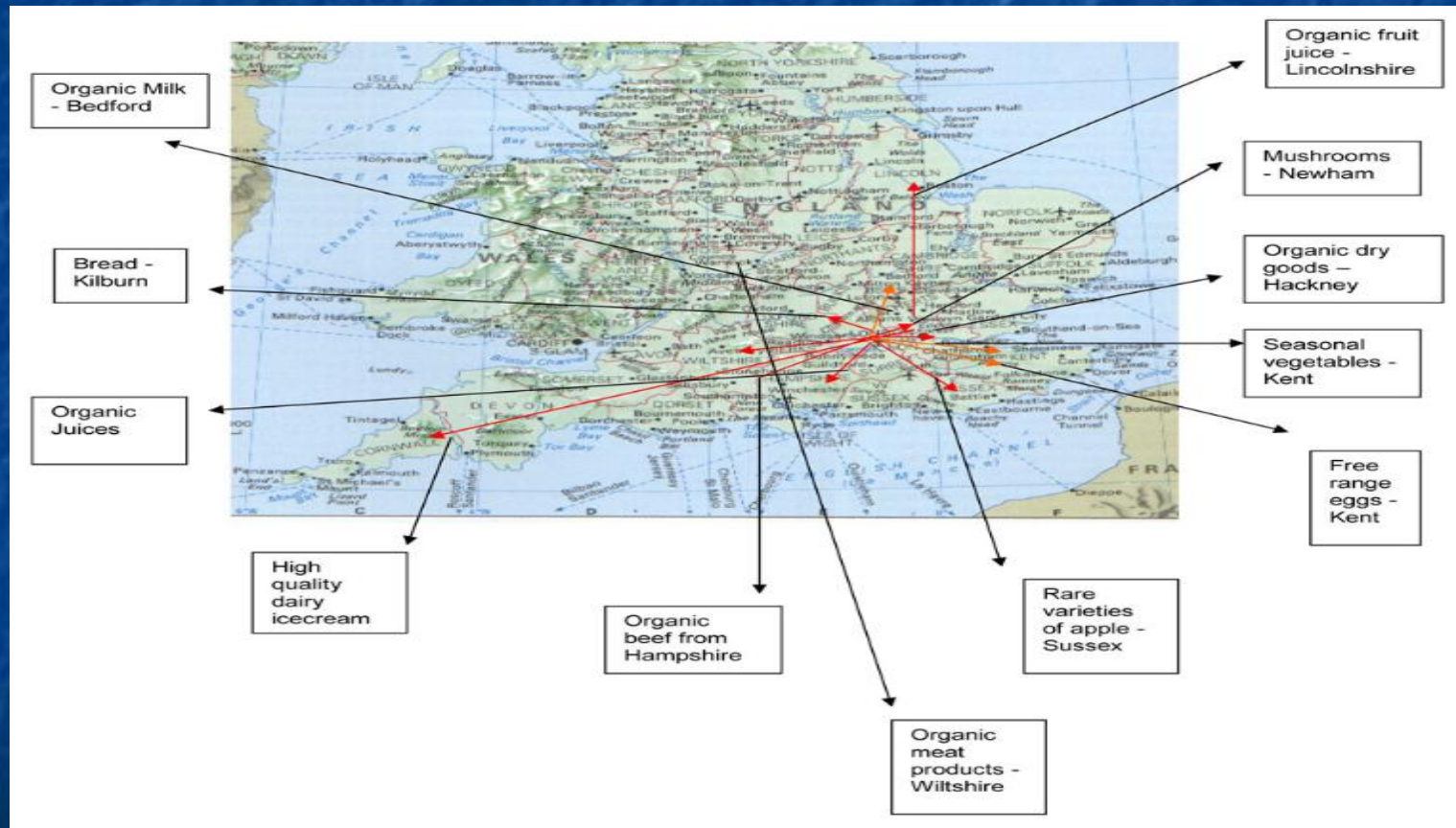


Products introduced

- Free Range Eggs
- Organic Meat and Chicken Products
- Organic milk
- Seasonal salads
- Apples - Kent Orchards
- Developing links with ethnic meals providers to include organic produce
- Organic fair trade tea, coffee,
- Organic dry goods such as oatmeal
- Organic fruit juices



Local Sourcing for the Royal Brompton



Other initiatives within the project

- Evaluation of possible change in healthy eating attitudes
- 'Barriers to distribution in London' report
- Local food Infrastructure development
- Replication Network
- London Food Strategy
- Hospital Caterers Association Study Days - Day Of Choice



Learning Outcomes

- The importance of taking a ‘step by step’ approach
- Being willing to alter suppliers to those willing to provide more local/organic food
- Work closely with suppliers to assist them wherever possible
- Gaining support from catering team is vital

Issues / Barriers

- The low level of catering budgets
- Delivery of local produce to London can mean a convoluted supply chain is necessary
- Lack of enthusiasm from some suppliers to alter the way they source their produce
- Initial low volumes of products, due to difficulties within other hospitals can mean increased prices
- Wider issues within the industry can impact on sourcing – such as closure of local dairies

Next Steps.....

- Develop plans for a 'local food centre'
- Measure impacts of altering sourcing
- Continue to develop linkages between companies to cut the amount of invoices and deliveries required
- Developing longer term contracts with producers
- Widen the project to encompass a whole SHA