



Defra's Strategic Direction

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OVERVIEW

- Welcome recognition of key issues
- However, details do not meet aspirations
- Strategy is not convincing in that:
 - issues are not fully understood
 - unlikely that proposed actions can be delivered
 - the conflict between “sustainability” and “economic growth and competitiveness” has not been addressed
- Insufficient evidence of funding
- No evidence of adequate resourcing to improve DEFRA’s performance



KEY EMERGING TRENDS

- Climate change measures will have greater impact on economy and society than has been recognised
- Volatile and expensive oil supplies will have greater impact than currently recognised
- Unreliable economic growth due to the above will mean funding for “spending departments” will be limited
- The above factors will significantly impact global food trade and energy-consuming food distribution/retail systems
- Increasing nutritional impoverishment and food deserts amongst poorer sections of society
- Increasing health problems due to poor nutrition
- Increased demand for niche foods from richer sections of society
- Pressure on all natural resources will grow locally and globally due to current economic and trade policies and biological limits leading to collapse will occur in some cases.



IMPLICATIONS FOR DEFRA'S PROGRAMME

- It will prove to be inadequate in scope, intensity and resources
- Partial recognition of the issues in the current strategy can be increasingly built upon
- Must re-examine the concept of “sustainable development” and, in particular, the areas of conflict between “growth and competitiveness” and “sustainability”
- Then plan accordingly.



WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR DEFRA'S PRIORITIES?

- Greater urgency required – timescale for actions must be shortened
- Need to win more resources from Government
- More credible “vision” to build morale, resources and effectiveness within the Department
- Need to develop a strategy for low emission, low energy food system focussed on healthy food security for all, with appropriate supply chains
- Develop trade and supply chains in food that are “appropriate” to these conditions
- Develop and promote animal production systems appropriate to these conditions
- Promote nutrition and dietary changes appropriate to these conditions
- Recognise that the UK is an urban/suburban society and that “rural communities” are not separate (if they exist) and plan accordingly.



BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEFRA TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Develop thought-leadership in Government to reassess and drive the debate regarding the conflicting objectives of “growth/competitiveness” and “sustainability”
- Link policies, strategy and tactical initiatives which will influence health and well-being with environmental and resource constraints and lead initiatives across Government and internationally