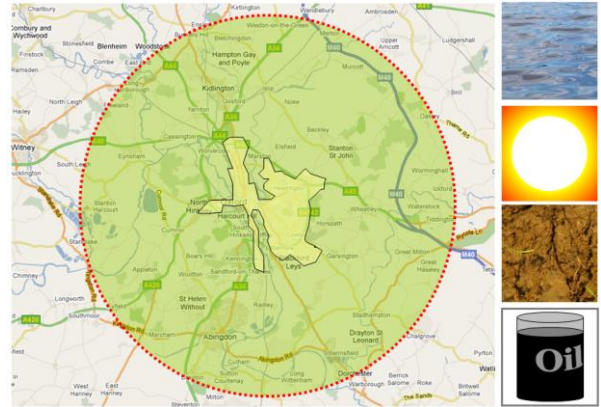


# FoodPrinting Oxford

Food in a finite world

## Project outline

To investigate the environmental impact and resilience of Oxford's food system, the potential for improvement, and to take the first steps in engaging the city to set targets for a sustainable food strategy



Oxford's food supply plays a critical role in the city's sustainability. First, our food system accounts for a major part of the city's environmental impact - responsible for up to 30% of our greenhouse gas emissions. Second, the process of growing, processing, delivering and preparing our food requires industrial scale quantities of finite natural resources – land, water, and energy. In a finite and uncertain world, ready access to these resources cannot be taken for granted. This means that our food supply is exposed to risk. It is a straightforward case; to eat we need to sustain our environment and its resources, so that our environment in turn can sustain us.

A lot of solutions are put forward to address food sustainability: buying locally, using global markets, industrial agriculture, peasant agriculture, organic food, GM crops, being vegetarian, eating British Beef. *FoodPrinting Oxford* is not about finding or promoting one particular solution; it is about providing people with clear and quantitative information, so that they can compare options and take proportionate action.

We propose an approach developed by LandShare in conjunction with Best Foot Forward in a project called 'How to Feed a City'. This approach allows us to:

1. Quantify the risks and impacts of our food system, so that we understand the magnitude of the problem
2. Measure the effectiveness of different strategies for addressing those risks and impacts, comparing them against the magnitude of the problem
3. Provide businesses and communities with the information and clarity that they need to evaluate which are the most effective places to take action, and identify who is in the best position to take those actions

The approach highlights the relationship between environmental impacts and supply chain risk factors - things which have practical implications for our ability to produce and supply food. We make this connection because it is our view that if we are going to motivate change on a serious scale, then we have to make a business case for taking action.

## What we plan to do

### 1. Investigate and report on Oxford's food system

We will make an analysis of two components of food sustainability, 'FoodPrints' and 'Provenance Balance', and will show how this sort of information can be translated into practical action:

1. **'FoodPrints'**: the land, energy, water and greenhouse gases associated with our food supply. We will:

- Calculate Oxford, and Oxfordshire's FoodPrints
- Quantify the factors which influence those figures – diet, production, provenance, packaging, preparation, waste
- Investigate the most effective ways to take action
- Identify in broad terms who in the supply chain is best placed to take those actions

**2. 'Provenance Balance':** where does our food come from, and how secure are our supply lines?  
We will:

- Provide breakdowns of where food is sold, and where it comes from; quantifying the proportions from different food 'zones': local, national, EU, and outside-EU
- Calculate the potential contribution that land in Oxfordshire could make towards providing us with each of the major food groups that our population consumes
- Evaluate the extent to which localising an element of Oxford's food supply would, or would not, address risk in the city's food system
- Conduct a 'gap analysis' to identify the key actions that would be required to create or maintain resilience in Oxford's food system

**3. Acting on the information.** We will:

- Present a case study of how Linacre College could analyse and influence the impacts and risk profile of the food sold through its canteen
- Describe in more general terms the process that other businesses, organisations, and individuals could use to understand and act on their food supply, and show how they could measure their contribution to the city's sustainability

## 2. Start a process of engagement

The report is intended to be the beginning of a process, during which we develop the resources and support to enable people to take the initiative and plan their part in contributing to the sustainability of Oxford's food system. It's important to reiterate that this process would: (1) give people the tools to make their own choices, and (2) would emphasise the long term benefits to those taking part.

At this stage we propose to engage people in two ways:

- 1. Project governance.** We will invite the following small group to help steer the project. This will meet just before work starts, and again as the report is being finalised and the launch / workshop is being planned.
  - Susan Hutchinson – Low Carbon West Oxford
  - Nick Brown – Linacre College
  - Dan Betterton – OxFood
  - Richard Sheane - Best Foot Forward
  - Barbara Hammond from Low Carbon Oxford will chair the meetings
- 2. Workshop.** We will run a workshop session as part of an Oxfordshire low carbon communities event, planned for the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Our aims will be to:
  - Explain the FoodPrinting approach and findings
  - Work with participants to show how they can plan and evaluate their own community food strategies
  - Come up with proposals for 'FoodPrint Targets' for Oxford and Oxfordshire

**The project findings will be made available in a report, to be launched in April 2012**