

BECOME A BETTER FOOD TRADER

CHANGE TASTES GOOD





OUR MISSION

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“We’re working to make our food system more sustainable and resilient in the face of climate change. We work with people who are passionate about providing their communities with real alternatives that make a direct link between those communities and the people producing their food. Between us, we can share learning, inspire more people, give ourselves a louder voice and bring about more change for the better.”

Julie Brown, Growing Communities

Better Food Traders are on a mission to provide an ethically-driven alternative to the mainstream, big business food system. We make it easy for people to choose climate- and people-friendly food. Better Food Traders offers an accreditation for community-led enterprises that sell good, healthy food as well as caring for the environment and all the people involved in the supply chain. We value fairness and transparency: paying ecological farmers and growers a fair price for their produce, sourcing climate-friendly food as locally as possible and telling customers more about the people that grow and supply their food.

What we are trying to achieve
Ultimately we want every shop, box scheme, market stall and retailer committed to the environment, to fairness in the food system and to providing people with great local food to join the Better Food Traders. We have established a network of Better Food Traders because we believe in the power of working together. Supporting each other, we can enable our smaller enterprises to thrive whilst providing people with an ethically-driven alternative to the current UK food system.



OUR PROGRAMME

Becoming a Better Food Trader gives your business a leg up, offering access to learning and development, experienced advisors in your field and surrounding you with a community of inspiring leaders in the sustainable food sector.

WHY ORGANISATIONS GET ACCREDITED

LEAD CHANGE

Better Food Traders set the gold standard for food retail practice and creates a community of leaders who can disrupt the current food system and deliver real change.

PEER TO PEER LEARNING

You will connect with a group of like-minded people, sharing knowledge on everything from customer retention and updating policies to automated payment methods and alternatives to plastic.

THIRD PARTY ACCREDITATION

Together we can shout louder, getting more exposure for your business through the Better Food Trader publicity work. Collective business data and individual case studies will help inform policy and campaign work at national level, supporting all the Better Food Traders to be recognised and easy to find.

TRAINING

We organise training sessions determined by the needs of our members to help make a positive difference to each individual organisation.

FOOD ADVISOR SUPPORT

Sessions with experienced advisors allow you to get information and support - sharing your doubts, hopes and thoughts can make everything much more doable.

IMPROVE IMPACT

By becoming a Better Food Trader you are signing up to a set of principles that will guide your business to operate in a way that is kind to people and the planet.

Lee Greens is a community-led veg bag scheme providing locally sourced, organic vegetables in South East London.



The Local Green Mural was painted to celebrate their fresh veg and fruit grown using ethical and environmental principals.



Veg Box People launched their organic box scheme in partnership with the University of Manchester, connecting Greater Manchester residents with local organic produce.



THE NETWORK

The founder members of the Better Food Traders are organisations that have been successfully running for 5 years or more. They represent a wealth of specialist experience and knowledge of the ethically-driven fresh food sector.

The Better Food Traders network is a place of mutual support and sharing of information. Network members understand what it's like to run a

small enterprise. We want each other to succeed because we're motivated by the bigger picture: giving our communities greater access to fruit and veg grown in a way that supports the environment and social justice.

The scheme will expand from fruit and veg schemes to market stalls, shops, online food hubs, community supported agriculture (CSA) and more over the coming years.



HOW TO APPLY

01 | Check your eligibility

Take this short eligibility test on the website at <https://bit.ly/2V3VRzs>

If you are eligible, you will be invited to fill out the full application form.

If you are not yet eligible, please get in touch to see if we can help you meet the criteria to become a Better Food Trader.

02 | Apply

Submit your application.

We offer support through the process.

You can download a copy of the application form questions, guidelines and our standards at <https://bit.ly/2uKf1j3>

03 | You're given the result

Our membership panel meets every six months to assess your application.

If you do not meet the criteria, we give you a list of suggested changes to enable you to become a Better Food Trader. You then have the option of updating and resubmitting your application.

What you'll need before you start the application:

- Your accounts from the last financial year
- Your spend from the last financial year, with each producer and supplier that you use, and their relation to you within the food zones. See <https://bit.ly/2ueYdjW> for more information on the food zones.
- Customer numbers, staff numbers and volunteer numbers
- Your policies for employment, pay ratio, volunteers and buying/suppliers
- Knowledge of how your business reduces waste and carbon footprint, and further reduction targets
- Thoughts about how you are making an impact on the food system and in your community
- Ideas about what you would like to do better over the next 12 months and some realistic targets for improvement

Don't worry:

If you run out of time

If you can't complete the application in one session you can save the form at any point and come back to it another time, using the unique link you were sent after filling in the eligibility form.

If you can't answer a question

You don't need to answer every question to become a member of the Better Food Trader network. Some of the questions will not apply to your operation, some may refer to things that you haven't yet put in place and some may refer to things that you haven't yet thought of.

If you don't understand a question

We are here to help you complete the form. Ask for clarification and support by emailing hello@betterfoodtraders.org and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

If any question doesn't make sense to you, please let us know - we will be frequently reviewing the process and the form so your feedback is very helpful!



WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Better Food Traders are governed by these principles that ensure the food they trade is farmed sustainably, the way they trade is fair to farmers, employees and customers, and the whole supply chain is transparent to customers.

If you are an organisation wanting to provide people with an ethically driven alternative to the current food system then join us and assess how well you meet the Better Food Trader principles.

THE PRINCIPLES

- #1 MISSION DRIVEN, TRADING FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE, NOT TO MAXIMISE PROFIT**
- #2 BUILDING SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY, TRUST AND COOPERATION**
- #3 SOURCING FOOD SUSTAINABLY, USING THE FOOD ZONES AS A FRAMEWORK**
- #4 TRADING FAIRLY**
- #5 CHAMPIONING ECOLOGICAL FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION**
- #6 PROMOTING A DIET THAT IS GOOD FOR BOTH PEOPLE AND PLANET**
- #7 DISTRIBUTING FOOD IN A LOW-CARBON, LOW-IMPACT WAY**
- #8 BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY IN SUPPORT OF OUR WORK**
- #9 STRIVING TO CHANGE THE BIG PICTURE**

#1. We are mission driven - trading for social purpose, not to maximise profit

Better Food Traders aim to provide affordable, sustainable products and services and decent livelihoods, rather than generate excessive profits for others. We aim to be profitable, but surpluses are used for wider benefit rather than just enriching individuals. We also aim to be resilient in ourselves, seeking to be financially sustainable and as independent of external funding as possible. Our legal forms, organisational structures and/or mission statements ensure the principles we believe in are built into our work regardless of changes to membership, staff, committee or trustees.



#2. We are committed to transparency, trust and cooperation throughout the food supply chain

There is little transparency in the current food system, which applies subsidies unfairly and allows a whole range of costs to the environment and communities to go unaccounted for. In contrast, we want to be honest and open in our financial dealings with those who supply our food (and expect the same from them); honest about how we spend any surpluses and honest with ourselves and the public about the choices we are making.

Continuing, 'hidden' subsidies can hide the true cost of the food we are providing and therefore don't help either to build a real picture of what is wrong with the current food system nor provide a real example of the alternatives we need to create. Measuring, publishing and amalgamating our results, rules, criteria and data is also important - to both prove our impact and 'make the case'.

#3. We source food sustainably, using the food zones as a framework

We want to see more ecological farms directly connected to the urban communities they feed, enabling supply chains to be shortened. In practice this means we source our food as locally, seasonally and directly as possible.



#4. We trade fairly

The ongoing practice of driving down the prices paid to farmers and producers in this country and across the world has led to untold hardship and negative consequences for the local and global environment. Better Food Traders pay farmers and suppliers what they need to be able to produce food sustainably, while also giving our customers a fair deal, paying ourselves living wages for our work and investing in our wider mission and community.

#5. We champion ecological food and farming

We support, and want to be seen to support, only those practices that do not increase the amounts of artificial chemicals, fertilisers and pesticides in our food and the environment, but which rely on sound soil and wildlife management and involve the highest standards of animal welfare. Ecological farms are low-input (applying organic standards); operate at an appropriate and human scale (predominantly small to medium-sized); they are mixed and

diverse; and they are built around human skills and labour backed up by appropriate technology and machines and grounded in sound science.

#6. We promote ways of eating and cooking that are good for people and planet

The current western diet has a massive environmental impact and contributes to escalating health problems such as obesity and diabetes. We champion a diet that reflects seasonality (and what can best be grown where), is mainly plant-based, involves fresh or minimally processed food, minimises the amount of food consumers waste and provides everyone with enough.

#7. We distribute food in a low-impact and low-carbon way

We make efficient and appropriate use of natural resources, respecting finite limits and integrating waste streams. The use of fossil fuels is minimised in favour of using renewable energy sources. We use resources wisely, by minimising the amount we use; reusing, recycling

and specifying environmentally friendly materials.

#8. We build a strong community in support of our work

Food can play an essential role in building community. Better Food Traders create jobs and increase skills in our communities, reconnecting people with farming and involving them in the production, trading and celebration of food. We make it easier and more affordable for people to choose and use fresh, seasonal and local food and work to raise awareness and understanding of how food choices made by individuals, households and organisations can create a sustainable food system.

#9. We strive to change the big picture

To make the difference the world needs now, change needs to happen across the whole of the food system. Our vision and our trading systems prioritise the local but work out to the global – enabling growers in urban and peri-urban areas, rural farmers, larger farms, wholesalers and imports to exist in harmony and building a food system that is collaborative, rather than competitive. We measure our impact and aim to inspire, advocate and influence: we articulate our vision and share learning with those in the wider food and political community.



CHANGE TASTES GOOD

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