

Food justice and a fair food system

Geoff Tansey, Food Ethics Council

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Food Ethics Council beginnings

- 1995 - Ministry of Agriculture ethics committee recommends standing committee for farm animal biotech - **no action**
- 1998 - **voluntary Food Ethics Council established**, after initiative by Joanne Bower, chair of Farm and Food Society (now disbanded) - mixed membership, most not ethicists
- **Ben Mepham** - part time executive director, 10 hours/week
- **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust** grant to fund activities
- 2000 - I was invited to join

Food Ethics Council first reports

- *Drug use in farm animals* (1999)
- *Novel foods: beyond Nuffield* (1999)
- *Farming animals for food: towards a moral menu* (2000)
- *After FMD: aiming for a values-driven agriculture* (2001)

Food Ethics Council initial method

- Working parties deliberated - mix of FEC members and invited experts in personal capacity
- Ben wrote reports
- Launched in House of Commons Committee room

What is ethics?

- Provides an explicit justification for your chosen course of action
- Helps identify what I sincerely believe I should do next based on the ethical principles guiding that decision

Which ethical principles?

- Respect for **Wellbeing**
 - do no harm (nonmaleficence)
 - do good / effect cure (beneficence)
- Utilitarian theory (JS Mill and J Bentham)
 - Cost benefit analysis
 - Greatest good for greatest number
- Problems
 - Depends on predictions of outcome - might be wrong
 - Assessing who/ what counts - fallible
 - Justify inequality
 - Goods and harms incommensurable

Which ethical principles?

- Respect for **Autonomy**
 - choice, freedom of action of individual or animal
- Idea of 'rights' (I Kant)
 - treat others as ends in themselves, with intrinsic value and not something that we just use for our own ends
 - Golden rule: do as you would be done by
- Problems
 - how to priorities duties - e.g protect from harm vs tell truth, if latter causes harm

Which ethical principles?

- Respect for **Justice**
 - is what we are doing fair?
- Justice as **fairness (Rawls)**
 - *'Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory, however elegant and economical, must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions, no matter how efficient or well arranged, must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust'*
- Problem
 - Defining what fairness means - ? Eg goods distributed according to need, or ability, or effort?

Ethical Matrix

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing		

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries			
Citizens			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries			
Citizens			
Farm animals			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries			
Citizens			
Farm animals			
The ecosystem			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries	Satisfactory income and working conditions		
Citizens			
Farm animals			
The ecosystem			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries	Satisfactory income and working conditions	Appropriate freedom of action	
Citizens			
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Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
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The ecosystem			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries	Satisfactory income and working conditions	Appropriate freedom of action	Fair trade laws and practices
Citizens	Food safety and acceptability. Quality of life		
Farm animals			
The ecosystem			

Ethical Matrix

	Wellbeing	Autonomy	Justice
People in food and agricultural industries	Satisfactory income and working conditions	Appropriate freedom of action	Fair trade laws and practices
Citizens	Food safety and acceptability. Quality of life	Democratic, informed choice e.g. of food	
Farm animals			
The ecosystem			

Ethical Matrix

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Farm animals			
The ecosystem			

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Farm animals	Animal welfare		
The ecosystem			

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Farm animals	Animal welfare	Behavioural freedom	
The ecosystem			

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Farm animals	Animal welfare	Behavioural freedom	Intrinsic value
The ecosystem			

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The ecosystem	Conservation		

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The ecosystem	Conservation	Maintenance of biodiversity	

Ethical Matrix

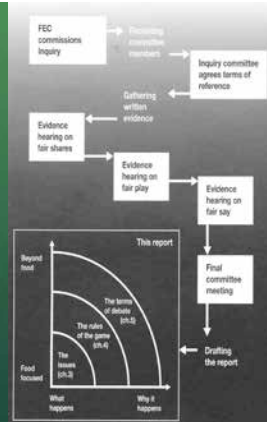
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The ecosystem	Conservation	Maintenance of biodiversity	Sustainability

Food Ethics Council, 2003 a step change

- Becoming a charity
- Appointing a full time director with further funding
- Beyond reports to draw different groups together
- Facilitate deliberation over contentious issues



The Inquiry into Food and Fairness



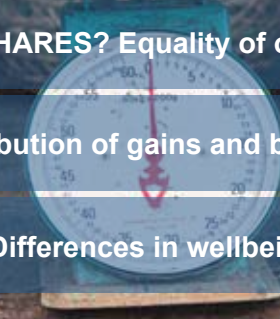
Food Justice

The report of the Food and Fairness Inquiry

FAIR SHARES? Equality of outcomes

Distribution of gains and burdens

Differences in wellbeing



Food Justice

The report of the Food and Fairness Inquiry

FAIR PLAY? Equality of opportunity

Access

Unequal distribution



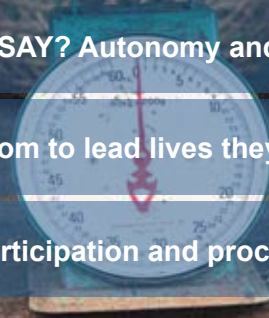
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FAIR SAY? Autonomy and voice

Freedom to lead lives they value

Participation and process



Balance and focus



Sustainability
Climate change

Human health &
biodiversity

Social justice



Tinkering or
transformation?

Food Ethics Council – we want...

VISION:

A food system where everyone can enjoy healthy food that is produced and traded fairly, sustainably and humanely.

MISSION:

To be the catalyst for a fair, sustainable and humane food system, by helping businesses, governments and civil society organisations navigate the ethical challenges surrounding food and farming.

Council members - 2017



Food Ethics Council next phase

- In-depth critique of how UK is performing
- Accompanying ethical analysis
- Food Policy Barometer
- As a measure of how far moving towards or away from our ambitious goal of fair, sustainable healthy food systems

Food Ethics Council 2nd food issues census



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Thank you