



**Where the food on
your plate
comes from !**



JUST ASK
WHERE THE FOOD ON YOUR
PLATE COMES FROM !

This major CLA consumer awareness campaign aims to encourage people to Just Ask where the food on their plate comes from.

When you're next eating out and want to find out where the food comes from, *Just Ask !!*

To support the CLA *Just Ask* campaign simply log onto www.cla.org.uk/justask and fill in the on-line supporters page.



Just Ask & the CLA **Food Chain Initiative**

Do you know where the food you eat comes from ? Does it really matter ? The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) believes it does and we launched our Food Chain Initiative at the CLA Game Fair 18 months ago. The policy, developed by CLA members, promotes the quality of British food, particularly at the regional and local level. It is designed to raise the awareness of consumers, policy makers, retailers and others, to the immense importance and value of well produced food. It also endeavours to underline the positive links between high standards of production and health, a well managed environment and successful rural economies.

There are many problems facing the food chain. Producer prices are continually squeezed by the actions of most of the major retailers, so some are producing at a loss or quite simply going out of business, and there are no clear rules for the labelling of imported produce. At the same time, we have far too much red tape and excessive public bureaucracy. Over-regulation stifles innovation and entrepreneurship leading to a less efficient economy and is prevalent throughout the food chain, making it difficult for regional and local food entrepreneurs to do business.

Focus needs to be put on the growth of regional and local food. As importantly, consumers need to be made more aware of the quality of British food and our high animal welfare and environmental standards: they also need to be aware of what is on a label and where food comes from before they buy. A system introducing country of origin labelling needs to be introduced by the government in concert with the industry so that consumers are reassured as to where the food they buy is produced according to laid down standards.

The CLA is putting a huge amount of work into this: looking at the supermarket code of practice and the Competition Commission inquiry, the labelling system for the food service sector, encouraging the far greater use of the EU's protected status scheme and generally for best practice in all aspects of the food chain.

As part of the CLA's centenary celebrations, we launched the 'Just Ask' campaign. This is changing the angle of pressure from the producer to the consumer by persuading the consumer to *just ask* where the food on their plate comes from whenever they are eating in restaurants, the pub or café. This will mean that pressure is placed on the supplier to source locally where possible but also that the consumer demands it – and the customer is always right.

A more informed food supply chain has innumerable advantages for both the food establishment and the customer. If the pub for example, is sourcing fresh local produce, that should be seen as a major marketing advantage. So it is important to let the public know. The operator should help inform the customer that the produce is of the highest quality. The more they know about the quality of what they are eating, the greater the chances of repeat business. "Just Ask" will also have knock on benefits for the food service business.



Just Ask – what people think

Since the launch of the Just Ask campaign in January 2007 many have come forward to support the campaign. Here are just a few of the comments we have received.

Aaron Patterson, Head chef at Hambleton Hall in Rutland says: *"We currently have a supplier based here on the peninsular who breeds a variety of cattle and we know exactly how they are fed, reared and looked after. I can tell you now it is the best beef I have ever tasted. "By sourcing locally we are not only supporting local businesses and providing our customers with complete assurance as to the origin of the food, it is also important that we have our own identity which reflects the region we are in."*

Bettie Riddell of The English Dining Room in Holmes Chapel, Cheshire says: *"I would happily support the campaign. Our customers already ask where our food comes from and often start to use our suppliers themselves. Using food produced as near as possible to the point of consumption obviously means less aircraft and lorries clogging up our airspace and motorways but it also means supporting British farmers in the only way that is sustainable."*

Barney Cunliffe, owner of the Gilpin Lodge Country House Hotel near Windermere, Cumbria is an enthusiastic supporter. *"I am very happy for our guests to ask where our food comes from – they already do. Tourism and farming should be able to work hand in hand with each other because our guests demand local food, produced by the farmers who look after the very countryside they come to see."*

Jenny Gamage, Restaurant Manager of the Friendly Farmer in Newark, Notts is passionate about local sourcing. *"We would encourage people to 'just ask' the next time they are eating out, even if you are stopping off at a run of the mill service station. If we can source local produce then there is no reason why others can't."*

General Manager Ian MacKenzie at The Peacock at Rowsley Derbyshire believes Just Ask is crucial to business. He says: *"We have our own unique sausages made to specific recipes by a local butcher which literally sell by the tonne. We also source five types of bread made to our own requirements which have been delivered everyday by our local baker for the last four years. We always look for artisans who can provide local produce which are special and unique to the area."*

Why not add your voice to the *Just Ask community* and make sure you know where the food on your plate comes from !

www.cla.org.uk/justask



***Just Ask* – how you can get involved**

Just Ask is the CLA's major consumer awareness campaign to encourage people to Just Ask where the food on their plate comes from.

We are asking that when you eat out you simply ask where the beef in your steak, where the apples in your apple pie or the milk in your custard comes from.

The objective is simple: to raise both the public's and food chain operator's awareness as to the origin of their food.

Everyone can help by “Just Asking” !

You can also support us by completing our on-line petition at www.cla.org.uk/justask.

The more people we can get to *Just Ask* the easier it will be to find out where our food on the plate comes from.

The CLA is also seeking links with other organisations in order to spread the message. If you or your organisation would like to get involved do not hesitate to contact Charles Trotman by e-mail (charles.trotman@cla.org.uk).

If you would like more information about the *Just Ask* campaign simply contact the CLA by e-mail (charles.trotman@cla.org.uk).

www.cla.org.uk/justask



***Just Ask* – join the *Just Ask* community**

I/We wish to support the Country Land and Business Association's campaign to *Just Ask* where my/our food comes from.

Name

Address

Tel/Email

If you would like more information about the *Just Ask* campaign simply contact the CLA by e-mail (charles.trotman@cla.org.uk).

Please send completed support forms to:
Charles Trotman
CLA
16 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PQ

www.cla.org.uk/justask



What next for the *Just Ask* campaign

Planned activities during 2008 include:

- Publishing the results of the CLA's public procurement survey at the Just Ask St Georges Day breakfast on 23 April;
- A series of regional St Georges Day *Just Ask* breakfasts to promote the best in regional and local food;
- Collaborating with the Meat and Livestock Commission on the latest research regarding menu transparency;
- Linking into the *Year of Food and Farming* which began in September 2007, aiming to reconnect school children with food and farming;
- At the 2008 CLA Game Fair, 25 – 27 July, at Blenheim Palace, the CLA Food Chain Initiative team will be promoting the *Just Ask* campaign through a series of events and seminars over the three days;
- A *Just Ask* seminar breakfast at the Royal Show on 3 July to promote the CLA's recommendations on public procurement;
- A national Just Ask reception to recognise the importance of regional and local food during British Food Fortnight;
- Encouraging MPs to sign an Early Day Motion (EDM) supporting the campaign which will be tabled during the current Parliamentary session;
- Working with all of the regional food groups through the regional Food Advocate network to promote *Just Ask* across the country.

To find out more about **Just Ask**, simply log onto www.cla.org.uk/justask



The CLA's *Just Ask* Regional Food Advocates

The *Just Ask* campaign is seeking to increase the general public's awareness of the food they eat when outside the home.

Over the coming 12 months, the CLA will be holding a series of national and regional events aimed at encouraging the consumer to "Just Ask" where the food on their plate comes from.

In order for the CLA to achieve this, we have put in place a network of Regional Food Advocates. These RFAs are local producers who have a passion and a commitment to good quality regional and local food.

The Regional Food Advocates are:

Name	Region	e-mail
Freddie de Lisle	East Midlands	freddie@delisle.co.uk
Charlie Ainge	South West	charlie.ainge@virgin.net
David Toms	South East	david@toms-fruit.co.uk
Penelope Bossom	West Midlands	penelope@overburyestate.co.uk
Caroline Cranbrook	East of England	carolinecranbrook@yahoo.co.uk
John Grantchester	North West	bw@grantchesterfarms.co.uk
James Cookson	North East	enquiries@flying-fox.co.uk
Anthony Roberts	Yorkshire	antyrobert@aol.com
Margaret Rees	Wales	charles.trotman@cla.org.uk

If you have any questions about the "Just Ask" campaign at the regional and local level, please e-mail your respective Regional Food Advocate.

To find out more about Just Ask, simply log onto www.cla.org.uk/justask



Prime Minister launches CLA *Just Ask* Campaign

On Tuesday 9 January 2007, the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Tony Blair and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Rt Hon David Miliband launched the CLA's *Just Ask* campaign at No 10 Downing Street, together with David Fursdon, CLA President. Celebrity chef Lesley Waters, Frank McKay (CEO of Brakes), Ian Crawford (Commercial Director of 3663) and John Shreeves (CEO of Taste of the West) were also there to support this national event. During the day, David Fursdon was interviewed on Farming Today and Channel 4 lunchtime news about *Just Ask*.

The *Just Ask* campaign is seeking to encourage the general public to ask where the food on their plate comes from whenever they are out for a meal – whether in a hotel, restaurant, pub or canteen. The campaign aims to increase public awareness of the origin of food so that the consumer can make an informed choice as well as helping the public reconnect with food and farming.

The national launch was co-ordinated with a series of regional launches across England and Wales, including events in the North West and North East, Yorkshire and the South West.

As the CLA engages public interest in the provenance of food by the *Just Ask* campaign this will draw together the results of parallel work for the introduction of a voluntary Country Of Origin Labelling system in the food service sector. The Country of Origin Labelling activity, in which the CLA is working with a number of other industry organisations, has two principal objectives:

- To bring about mandatory Country of Origin Labelling for beef within the current EU legislative framework;
- To encourage adoption of voluntary Country of Origin Labelling for other primary products.

What next for the *Just Ask* campaign

- This is a consumer awareness campaign focusing on consumer choice;
- The campaign also links into the Year of Food and Farming which started in September 2007, aiming to reconnect school children with food and farming;
- MPs will be encouraged to sign an Early Day Motion (EDM) supporting the campaign which will be tabled during the current Parliamentary session;
- The CLA will work with all of the Regional food groups through the Regional Food Advocate network to promote *Just Ask* across the country. Details of the *Just Ask* campaign calendar can be found on the *Just Ask* website;
- At **The CLA Game Fair** – 25-27 July, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire – the CLA food chain initiative team will be promoting the *Just Ask* campaign through a series of events and seminars over the 3 days;

To find out more about **Just Ask**, simply log onto www.cla.org.uk/justask



***Just Ask* – background information**

A big part of the food and farming strategy since the Curry report of 2002 is 'reconnection' - putting food consumers and farmers more in touch with one another. Initially much emphasis has been on actions for farmers in putting more effort into local and regional foods, higher quality and farmers markets. There have been great strides in this area in recent years. Our new campaign is to work from the other end and try and influence consumers through our *Just Ask* campaign.

The food and farming sector is at the frontline of Government's approach to climate change and the natural environment. The food and farming sector has a very significant environmental footprint. The *Just Ask* campaign is important not only in reconnecting the consumer with British food and farming but is also an important way of reducing the carbon footprint of food consumption both at home and abroad.

The CLA and others in the sector have helped to begin the process of informing the consumer in relation to the food retail sector. We now intend to focus on the food service sector which makes up approximately half of the annual domestic consumer spend on food, such as food purchased from a fast food outlet, a canteen, pub or a hotel.

The *Just Ask* initiative seeks to encourage the British public to question where their food comes from. The idea is to try and get people to repeat the mantra, 'Just ask ...' where the lamb in this curry was produced; whether the apples in this pie are English and so on. This involves raising the awareness of not only the public but also those in the food chain, from policy maker to opinion former, as to the origin of the food, wherever and however it is consumed.

Celebrity chefs will help to promote the campaign and other industry partners will be involved throughout the year. One particular focus will be educating the next generation of consumers and the CLA will be actively encouraging its members to open up their farms for educational purposes in partnership with Farming and Countryside Education (FACE), who launched the Year of Food and Farming with the support of the DfES, DEFRA and the Department of Health in September 2007.

To find out more about Just Ask, simply log onto www.cla.org.uk/justask

