



# Diversifying Public Food Procurement

Bob Doherty

Dean of School for Business and Society  
University of York



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

**Grow It** YORK





# My Journey






# Unprecedented Time in UK Food Policy







# FixOurFood (4 Departments at York and 4 other universities, team of 32 with 5 PhD students)

## Regenerative healthy eating for young children

- Change food environments and menus
- Reduce inequalities in diet and health
- Empower children to be agents of change

## Regenerative hybrid food economies

- Investigate the success criteria for purpose driven hybrid businesses
- Scaling up hybrid businesses – entrepreneurial ecosystem
- New hybrid business models

## Regenerative farming

- Investigate limiting factors in adoption of RF
- Stimulate shift to RF
- Evaluate potential within the region

New policies, governance, procurement mechanisms and metrics





# Yorkshire Collaborators





# School food system - so much potential

- 30-50% food eaten at school - for some, the only hot meal
- Universal provision supports population health and well-being while making the biggest difference to those in greatest need without stigma
- Not just food - Whole school approaches to food installs lifelong positive behaviours with food: include pastoral support - food environment - food; community engagement





# Food Procurement and Young People Reports





# Auto-enrolment of FSM

- Most vulnerable children not receiving the food they are entitled to
- Supporting >100 local authorities (workshops, knowledge sharing, 102 areas accessed auto-enrolment toolkit)
- Of 69 areas responded to our survey, 23 are now implementing and 18 are in set-up
- Unofficial data from 18 local authorities:
  - >25,000 total additional children receiving FSM
  - ~ 1,133 additional children per local authority
  - ~£27,000,000 additional Pupil Premium
- Some schools are seeing substantial increases, with one area having 5 schools with ~100 extra children

[FixourFood](#)  
[toolkit](#)





# Holidays Activities and School Programme

## KEY FINDINGS



### KEY FINDING 1

Provision was diverse across local authorities. Implementation models differed between public and private organisations as well as Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs). This allowed for local leadership and creativity in delivery, but also a varied quality between providers.



### KEY FINDING 2

The meals served had a positive impact on food insecurity and provided children with a more varied, healthier diet than if not attending the clubs.



### KEY FINDING 3

The benefits of attending the holiday clubs were felt both by children and their wider families. Children enjoyed the opportunity to socialise and learn new skills and some were reported to be better behaved at home as a result.

With their children attending the clubs, parents were able to work. Parents also benefited from opportunities to socialise within their local community.



### KEY FINDING 4

Local authorities stepped up to the challenge of the short turnaround time between the confirmed funding and provision delivery. Despite the time pressure, they delivered well-rounded programmes and established a strong foundation for delivery of future provision.

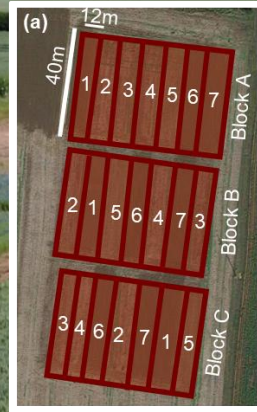
Paper (under review) also highlights value in helping parents work

Uncertainty with funding puts pressure on local authorities and programmes and allows little preparation time

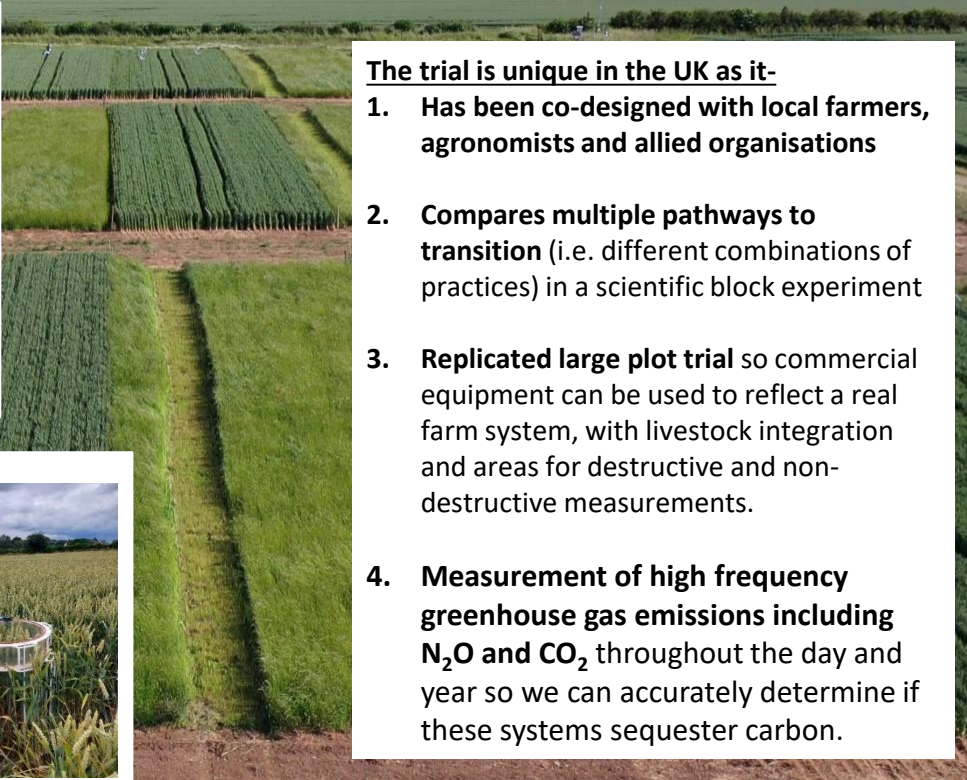




**Aim: to demonstrate and measure the impacts of different transition strategies to regenerative agriculture**



(b) Treatment number and principles followed	
1	Conventional farming: no RA principles followed
2	Minimise soil disturbance & keep the soil covered
3	Trt 2 + increase diversity
4	Trt 3 + integrate livestock
5	Trt 4 + maintain a living root all year round
6	Change in cereal rotation to include herbal ley
7	Long-term herbal ley



**Measurements**

- Soil chemical, physical and biological properties
- Hydrological properties and water quality
- Soil dwelling invertebrates
- Pests, disease and weed incidence
- Crop development, yield and yield quality
- N<sub>2</sub>O, CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> fluxes and C and N balances
- Costs and gross margins of each system
- Site meteorological conditions e.g. rainfall, soil temperature, solar radiation



**The trial is unique in the UK as it-**

1. Has been co-designed with local farmers, agronomists and allied organisations
2. Compares multiple pathways to transition (i.e. different combinations of practices) in a scientific block experiment
3. Replicated large plot trial so commercial equipment can be used to reflect a real farm system, with livestock integration and areas for destructive and non-destructive measurements.
4. Measurement of high frequency greenhouse gas emissions including N<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub> throughout the day and year so we can accurately determine if these systems sequester carbon.



# Working with University caterers – Campus Kitchen

- Catering team aim to ‘enable the students at York to taste some excellent local produce and eat healthy food that is full of flavour and sustainable’
- FixOurFood has encouraged the team to work with local/sustainable suppliers
- Budget is an issue but not the only consideration
- Yorkshire Pasta Company as suppliers seen as very positive
- Lots of individual smaller suppliers harder to manage, but suppliers like Delifresh can offer a workable solution





# Yorkshire Food Business Update

- Strong partnership with Yorkshire business networks
- Yorkshire Grain Alliance Outreach (Poster and Website)
- Deliciously Yorkshire sustainability awards





# Regional policy impact

- Sheffield Local Food Plan
- Bradford Food Strategy
- North Yorkshire Council Plan
- LEP Carbon Negative strategy
- Food Strategy Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission
- March 2024 launch of the FixOurFood Commission

