

Personalising the food chain

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This workshop sets out to explore how the food chain can be personalised through a range of hands-on activities and a presentation of ways in which schools are being encouraged to help young people reconnect the food they eat with where it comes from.

At present the UK Government has a clear agenda that schools should play a more active part in shaping attitudes to healthy eating. A report in October 2005 sets standards that consider children's needs across a broad spectrum and address not only nutritional requirements but also the wider issues of what children learn about food: where it comes from, how it is produced and how to cook food for themselves and their own families in the future. A multi-faceted approach to healthy eating which touches on many different aspects of school life is likely to be the most effective way forward.

At the heart of this agenda is a disconnection between food and farming and the reality is that many young people have little concern about where or how their food is produced. How can food miles, freshness and animal welfare become real live issues of meaning? The answer may be to personalise the food chain so that the people who grow and prepare our food are more like our neighbours and their concerns become ours.

FACE is working with schools and local food initiatives to develop curriculum resources and activities that encourage informed discussions about food choices. Many of these are making the connections with actual farmers who grow their food, those who process and deliver it and the people cooking it – chefs, parents or the young people themselves. Offering visits to farms, market gardens, farmers' markets, farm shops all help to add character to what otherwise is an impersonal sequence of events.

Biography

Bill Graham was involved in education at botanic gardens for many years before moving to Farming & Countryside Education (FACE) which is a partnership organisation that helps young people learn more about food and farming in a sustainable countryside.