

Response ID ANON-TXTF-RUTS-M

Submitted to **National Food Strategy - Call for Evidence**

Submitted on **2019-10-24 16:51:14**

Introduction

1 Data protection notice

2 Would you like your response to be confidential?

No

Please explain clearly in writing why you need to keep these details confidential:

3 What is your name?

Name:

Professor Carolyn Roberts, on behalf of the Institution of Environmental Sciences

4 What is your email address?

Email:

info@carolynroberts.org

5 What is the name of your organisation?

Organisation:

Institution of Environmental Sciences

6 Who are you responding as?

Non-governmental organisation – In an official capacity as the representative of a non-governmental organisation / trade union / trade body / other organisation.

About your organisation: NGOs

16 What area does your organisation primarily operate within?

The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science

please specify:

17 Where does your organisation operate? (please select all that apply)

North East, North West, West Midlands, East Midlands, South West, South East, Yorkshire and the Humber, East of England, Greater London, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Outside the UK

Your views

19 Please enter your response below

please enter your response below:

The Institution of Environmental Sciences is a professional body representing several thousand Members and Fellows working across all areas of environmental science including, inter alia, air quality, water science and management (freshwater and marine), land condition, soil science and management, ecosystem science and management, Environmental Impact Assessment and Higher Education teaching and research. Our Members and Fellows work in industry, public authorities and agencies, government Departments, consultancies and universities, in the UK and across the world.

Alongside our overarching intention to lead debate, disseminate and promote environmental science and sustainability, one of our principal objectives is to ensure that public policy is informed by well-founded scientific evidence. We are hence very supportive of Defra's consultation on food strategy. Another objective of the Institution is to ensure that environmental management is carried out in an integrated way, where different elements of the environment are maintained in balance, rather than externalities from one system (for example food production) having deleterious impacts on others, for example biodiversity, climate, soil, or water quality and quantity.

The UK's food supplies need to be generated within a system that respects the holistic nature of the natural and managed worlds, and that maintains human and environmental system stability at both local and global scales. This issue is increasingly well understood by the UK public, and is captured in several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to which the UK is a signatory, and to which the Institution of Environmental Sciences fully subscribes.

Furthermore, food production needs to be undertaken with due regard to maintaining genuinely 'circular economies', where overall losses are minimised by careful husbandry, effective transport systems, appropriate storage, and informed customer choices. Food waste is a particular concern, and whereas

considerable effort has been invested in ensuring economically-efficient systems from 'farm to fork', more work is required across the whole food production and consumption system, including the economic, environmental and social costs associated with waste. WRAP have been a national leader in this arena, but there is more to do to push for zero waste.

The current food production system within the UK is subsidised at various points, including through the EU Common Agricultural Policy, fuel and energy subsidies, and taxation policy. The Institution of Environmental Sciences would like to see all Government investment in food production systems based on a careful analysis of their impact on climate and climate change (particularly greenhouse gas emissions), water consumption, soil damage and biodiversity. Any farm support should be deployed to generate a wide range of public goods, including better public mental and physical health, multiple ecosystem service benefits (including biodiversity, wildlife and pollination services) and an accessible countryside.

The Institution of Environmental Sciences wishes to see further encouragement to farmers and fish farmers increasingly to deploy low input production systems, minimising the use of pesticides and herbicides, antibiotics and artificial fertilisers. Whilst we do not yet feel that there is sufficient evidence to support the wholesale adoption of 'organic' production, this system urgently needs a fuller analysis. Such analysis needs to consider UK land take, international food imports, carbon sequestration in soil and vegetation, and the scenic value of the UK countryside.

The Institution of Environmental Sciences would like to see regular reporting on measurable targets associated with all elements of the circular economy for food, identifying inputs and losses at different scales from local to global, and over different timescales. Further scientific research is required to identify appropriate key targets; UK universities, through the Natural Environment Research Council, are well placed to undertake such research.

please upload supporting evidence in a.docx or .pdf file format.:

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Your views

20 Which of the following areas does your response best relate to? (please select all that apply)

Agriculture, Economy, Environment, Health, Other, please specify below

if other, please specify:

The need for an holistic approach to all relevant environmental and human systems

Consultee Feedback on the Online Survey

21 Overall, how satisfied are you with our online consultation tool?

Satisfied