



RECOVERING FROM COVID-19: A STATEMENT FROM THE REAL FOOD CAMPAIGN UK

The Real Food Campaign UK is part of the British Holistic Medical Association. It is a health-led, cross-sector collaboration and exists to educate, advocate and campaign for real food and better health for ALL.

The Real Food Campaign UK is adding its voice to the increasing number of concerned citizens and groups from every part of society - doctors, healthcare practitioners and health workers, academics, chefs, regenerative and sustainability-led farmers and small food producers and retailers. We are demanding that the Government and public health agencies take urgent action to recognise and address the impact that food quality and methods of food production have on the health and the quality of life of every UK citizen and ultimately, on our planet.

The determinants of Covid-19 are recognised as the conditions in which people are born, live, work and age. These disproportionately increase their risk for and recovery from Covid-19 and lead to an unacceptable death toll. The same determinants underlie the rising and equally unacceptable numbers of non-communicable chronic illnesses - such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease to name but a few.

We know that an overwhelming majority of chronic disease conditions are diet and lifestyle-driven and we know that this is crippling the NHS and our health and social care services.

We know that a nutrient-dense diet is a prerequisite for well-functioning metabolic health and for building a resilient immune system. Covid-19 has highlighted the urgent need to address the impact of poor nutrition and unhealthy lifestyles which make us all significantly more susceptible to viral attack, serious health issues and untimely death.

Evidence is also emerging that intensive agricultural and livestock farming practices, industrial food production processes, complex food distribution chains and food retail systems are undermining public health through the decades' long production of nutritionally impoverished, unhealthy, processed and ultra-processed foods. These same practices and systems also play a significant part in undermining our communities and local economies, further impacting the social determinants of health and seriously challenging the viability of our ecology and environment.

Moreover, as the UK's high food standards are on the table in trade-deal negotiations, we are facing a further and wholly unacceptable compromise to our public health.

We know that human health, food, lifestyles and the totality of our environment are inextricably linked; no one element can thrive in isolation.

The Real Food Campaign advocates for food that promotes health, is nutrient-dense, safe, and minimally or unprocessed. We advocate for food that is raised and grown in ways that protect, regenerate and sustain our soils, our health, all of nature and our planet.

We will work collaboratively across all parts of the health and food and farming sectors to inform and empower citizens, communities, food and health providers to recognise that real food is medicine and equip them to make choices for better health.

We will campaign and partner with campaigns to restore conscious, regenerative farming and growing practices that sustain health for people and planet and promote the restoration and development of local infrastructures that encourage collaborative and thriving food communities.

We believe a health-supporting real food diet:

- is nutrient-dense and delicious, using a wide variety of whole ingredients, cooked from scratch as often as possible
- should be grown and produced in ways that support health, free from harmful chemicals and additives
- is our birthright and should be affordable and accessible to ALL
- can nurture community, sharing and connecting with family, friends, local economies and re-connecting with nature
- supports and restores our soils, our oceans and our natural environment
- is about respect for plants, for animals, for nature and for the farmers, growers and cooks who feed us
- can heal our bodies, our minds and our society.

We are all in this together and every part of society has a responsibility to collaborate in the recovery from Covid-19 and beyond. The Real Food Campaign UK calls on the Government and public health agencies take urgent action to recognise and address the impact that food quality and methods of food production have on the health and the quality of life of every UK citizen and ultimately, on our planet.

The Real Food Campaign UK

17 June 2020

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