**Minutes from the Just Eat It Panel Discussion**

**The four panellists were as follows:**

Lucy, a volunteer for Olio – a network of volunteers found across multiple countries, they find food from cafés and restaurants, people use the app to order and pick up the food.

Pauline from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine – has conducted research on sustainable and healthy diets, which looks at projections on the effects of current diets on the climate by 2030, 2040… The research also explores ways of ensuring there is enough water to produce all animal based food. Case scenarios are also taken into consideration, such as how much a 20% reduction would help.

Sara from Food Assembly – an online platform with the aim of shortening the food supply chain. Thanks to food assemblies, farmers know exactly how much is pre-ordered and know how much to provide.

Maude from FareShare, who works specifically for FareShare Go – a platform on which food can be given to non-profits, communities, and schools, to name a few. They redistribute with their vans and people can pick the food up for free.

**Q&A:**

**Q: How can I find out more about the expiry date?**

Maude: Although we aim to educate the people, with meat for example, it can be tricky. You can check the different types of ‘expiry date’ online; It`s good to note that UK has fewer options that producers can use, compared with the US.

Sara: It is also necessary to trust your senses and judge based on smell, appearance and taste.

**Q: I met someone through the Olio app, got a bag of flour dated 2015 and it was great.**

Lucy: Exactly, it’s a community thing; people get together and pick up all this food.

**Q: Has anyone ever heard of someone suing a supermarket for taking bad food from the bin?**

A: Not necessarily but one thing we need to keep in mind is that if there is risk of getting ill, the homeless can’t afford to see a doctor if they get food poisoned so most of the times, supermarkets would rather be stricter than risk making people sick.

**Q: How much water does it take to produce 2kg of beef? I heard it is the same with almonds, that it takes a lot of water. Also, red meat is a carcinogen.**

Pauline: That is true. Water footprint is important to look at and also chocolate has a high water footprint, just like red meat. You need to make trade-offs between different types of bad; in India if people would continue to eat at the same rate they would have to decrease the water footprint by 30%. During this research, people were put in groups based on what they eat, and each diet that had a low water footprint had high GHG emissions and vice versa! So it is difficult to say what food is good or bad from an environmental point of view. There is still room for advancements and shifting diets.

**Can you get into trouble here in the UK for going into dumpsters?**

Maude: As long as you don’t trespass, if you are not breaking in no, but some places have locked bins and they even put bleach to prevent people from scavenging. One Green Group in SOAS organises dumpster diving!

**Q: How does it make economic sense to produce so much food? Someone along the logistic chain doesn’t get paid, right? Also, how can a vegan’s diet use a 13th part of that of an omnivore’s?**

Maude: We want manufacturers to send us their food but actually it is cheaper for them to throw it away than to repackage and redistribute it. FareShare are working with the government to try stopping it, and the government should subsidise the food industry but they don’t at the moment.

Lucy: With the Olio app, everything is run by volunteers and nobody takes any cost in terms of packaging, as volunteers go all the way to people’s doors. If 20% of Americans were vegetarians for a week that would end world hunger.

Maude: The environmental and health impact of vegan diets was researched and if you have knowledge of your food basket, you reduce the risk of diseases but that knowledge isn’t always there, and with a vegan diet it is difficult to get everything you need on a daily basis, so it’s only good if you do it properly. Plus, if you go from a meat-rich diet to vegan, it can depend because, for example, almonds have a high water footprint, and in some scenarios vegan diets overlap the meat-rich Icelandic diet. Therefore, be wise about how you eat if you are concerned about the environmental impact.

**Q: Is there pressure on supermarkets to deal with food waste? Are there laws in place?**

Maude: Tesco are trying to work it out, France and Italy have a legislation to enforce, but UK does not. There are incentives and FareShare are lobbying. Asda and Waitrose are aware that it’s also good for their image. It’s the shops’ fault but also ours, as consumers. In Australia they don’t stock things that aren’t in season. There is a lot of online pressure and it is mounting, but as a consumer you have a choice so that’s a good start too.

**Q: with the global food crisis, insecurity, poverty, how do you keep the momentum going on the awareness?**

Sara: I always start small and talk about food waste, even with friends, and hold myself accountable. If everyone does something about it, it does make a difference. Give an hour of time a week, because if everyone did that, it would make a difference. In Japan they have a Make Your Own Lunch Day in schools and children love it, there is almost zero food waste, so that connectedness with your food is possibly key, knowing what grows when, not to eat processed food etc. Do not forget there is so much poverty in London and so many people around us don’t have food. Get the conversation going and make people aware, when you’re in this line of work you see it a lot.

**Q: Education needs to improve, children need to learn, they think food magically appears and disappears… Do you organise workshops with schools?**

Maude: FareShare and others do all kinds of cookery workshops and we help schools that don’t have private funding.

Lucy: Through Olio we get a lot of students who spread the word, so if you know someone, Olio are quite supportive. The Eat Well Plate/ Eat Well Guide was removed as apparently people aren’t ready yet, and yet children in Y2 know some food is unhealthy or not good to eat often, and that certain foods are bad for the environment. It’s funny then that the government think we aren’t ready and basically say that the population knows less than a child in Y2.

**Q: Some cafés offer rescued food, like in Notting Hill. Do you know any more?**

A: Blueprint Café does it, Leaf in Notting Hill as well, but they are pop-ups, like Wasted in Selfridges. TryFocal is an EU initiative to make restaurants more sustainable. Many producers make food out of surplus food, for instance Toast Ale makes beer out of bread, and there are many more examples.