

McLAYS MONTHLY

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McLays Foods



SPUD WATCH

RASPBERRIES

WARSAW

THURSDAY PRICE

SEASONALITY | SUSTAINABILITY

SALAD & LEAFY GREENS

Chard
Lettuce
Rocket
Spinach
Spring Onion

ROOT VEGETABLES & BRASSICAS

Beetroot
Carrots
Cauliflower
Kohlrabi
Purple Sprouting Broccoli
Radish

PODS, STALKS & FLESHY VEG

Celery
Courgette
Cucumber
Fresh peas
Mushrooms
Runner Beans
Tomatoes

FRUIT & BERRIES

Blueberries
Currants
Gooseberry
Melons
Oranges
Raspberries
Rhubarb
Strawberries

SPUD WATCH

A new crop of new season baby potatoes are arriving, but due to the fluctuating weather conditions and a pretty miserable start to the summer, they are not quite in the condition we'd like them to be yet.

The skins are "fluffy" at the moment, but the harvest should be in fully swing by the end of this month and we'll see them at their waxy best.



Raspberries in Scotland have a long harvesting season, typically from late June through until October. Our unique climate allows for longer berry season than lots of other places. They fruit summer and autumn making these berries bountiful. Freeze or dry and enjoy through the winter.

'VISIONARY' PROJECT WARSAW KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE



visionary



To Poland we went, in pursuit of pickles, pierogis and sustainable procurement. Last month, Karen and I went on an exchange trip to Warsaw to support a knowledge exchange between practitioners (farmers, producers, supply chain actors, processors, NGOs). It focussed on the transformation of food provision systems toward greater sustainability and resilience.

We visited several sites across the value chain; cooperatives, organic markets and wholesale logistics hubs. They provided key insights into the challenges in how food is produced, distributed and accessed across different sectors and the impact this has on local economies, the environment.

For us we had a particular interest in public procurement and the challenges of getting organic produce into our schools. We wanted to find out what they were doing differently in Poland, that allowed smaller farmers to get their produce on to public sector plates. At the moment, farmers can't process their own organic produce, so they need to send it south of the border to be packaged correctly. Ideally, government support should fund co-operatively owned, regional, micro-processing hubs as part of the 'Scottish Organic Plan'. Following discussions with those working in this field, they feel that something mobile that could move between farmers would be the way forward.

We need to use public sector resilience to build food system resilience in Scotland, through strategic procurement policies. Here's what we learned in Warsaw:

WARSAW AGRI-FOOD WHOLESALE MARKET IN BRONISZE

A visit to the largest and most modern wholesale market in Central and Eastern Europe



“We go by the Thursday price” was one of the first things that we were told by our host Maciej, on a sunny morning in Warsaw at the largest and most modern wholesale market in Central and Eastern Europe. It’s a place where over 30,000 farmers sell their produce – many from the back of their cars.

The market allows local, independent farmers to access large scale urban distribution. There is a “pay-at-the-gate” entry fee (proportional to the size of their vehicle) that grants them access, allowing them to then sell their produce at whatever price they like, while retaining 100% of the profit. This allows them to access urban populations without large fees or compliance, including access to public procurement models through distributors or cooperatives.

Public procurement in Poland is dynamic and based on the seasonality and availability of the produce. It is dictated by the average ‘Thursday price’, the average price that the independent farmers are selling their produce for. This allows for a real-time average, and people know exactly what is in the ground and growing at that time as Thursdays are the truest reflection of a crop’s current supply-and-demand reality for that week.

This works because fresh produce prices are highly volatile due to weather and seasonal shifts. The contracts do not have a single fixed price for carrots or apples that remains accurate for an entire 12-month school calendar, for example. If it did, a bad frost would cause distributors to lose money. Public sector tenders include pricing index clauses directly into the specifications of tenders.

The biggest takeaway for us was that there are very few hurdles to get locally grown, organic produce from farmers on to public sector plates. The whole process seems to be a lot more ‘organic’ and supports a more regenerative, resilient food system.



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