

PRESS RELEASE

SFDF'S 'A FUTURE OF FOOD' BRINGS SCHOOLS AND INDUSTRY TOGETHER

Wednesday 8 September 2010

Today the Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF)¹ will be bringing together school teachers, lecturers and students with food and drink manufacturers from all corners of Scotland for an event² to showcase SFDF's 'A Future in Food'³ programme.

'A Future in Food' is an innovative national programme designed with the aim of inspiring and encouraging young people to think about a career in the food and drink industry. With careers opportunities in food science, engineering, finance, IT, and many more, 'A Future in Food' works closely with both teachers and food companies to broker long term partnerships and give young people skills, real life experiences and a better understanding of opportunities whilst supporting and demonstrating the industry's broader relevance within the Curriculum for Excellence. It is designed to ensure there are clear connections between what they learn at school to courses, qualifications and employment and career opportunities in the food and drink industry.

To support the programme, SFDF has produced a series of films and case studies⁴ with the help and the contribution of many young people employed in or aspiring to join this vibrant sector. These are now available to food companies, careers advice professionals, schools, colleges, universities and training providers across Scotland, as a resource to help them in promoting the industry as a career destination of choice⁵.

SFDF Director, Flora McLean explains: "We think that if we can work with schools, we can show young people how an interest in business studies, marketing, engineering or IT, for

example, can be linked in with the food and drink industry. This, in turn, supports teachers because the experiences companies are able to provide fits in with Curriculum for Excellence”

“*A Future in Food* has been established to encourage young people to think about the food on their plates.... How is it produced? Where did the ingredients come from? How does it get to consumers? What type of skills are required? ... and, in doing so, raise awareness of the many and varied opportunities available to anyone keen on a career in food.”

“Due to the diverse nature of the food and drink industry and themes such as sustainability, ethical trading, new product development and health and wellbeing, there are opportunities for engagement with many subjects including maths, sciences, IT, technology and Home Economics. There are also exciting possibilities for cross curricular activities”.

Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment, said: “Scotland’s food and drink industry is a key contributor to the economy and offers many varied and exciting career opportunities for young people. Its future success depends on attracting people with the right skills and qualifications to support continued growth.

“The ‘*A Future in Food*’ programme gives pupils the chance to gain real life experiences in the food and drink industry. The programme fits well with our new approach through Curriculum for Excellence and will enhance learning for young people as they deepen their understanding of food.”

Gerry McBride, Strategic Relations Manager, Skills Development Scotland added: “Skills Development Scotland is delighted to be working in partnership with the Scottish Food & Drink Federation to support *A Future in Food*. The food and drink industry is a priority sector for Scotland, with diverse and rewarding career options for young people. This project will involve a range of partners and is one of the steps being taken to challenge skills gaps and labour shortages in key areas.”

For more information, please contact Cath Wilkins or Rebecca Wilhelm on 020 7420 7132/40.

Notes to Editors

1. SFDF is the voice of the Scottish food and drink manufacturing industry – Scotland’s largest manufacturing sector. For more information about SFDF and the industry we represent visit: <http://www.sfdf.org.uk>
2. The event will be hosted at the Scottish Parliament by Lewis Macdonald MSP and will include keynote addresses from Flora McLean, SFDF Director and Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment.
3. *A Future in Food* has been made possible with support from the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) towards the development of new promotional materials. It builds on the very well received careers film ‘[A World of Opportunities](#)’ launched last year.
4. *A Future in Food* films and written case studies documenting how very different food and drink employers have benefited from linkages with schools and colleges are available to view now on the [SFDF website](#)

In producing the films for *A Future in Food*, SFDF filmed a wide cross section of enthusiastic people working within food and drink companies, including:

Clint Conlin, IT Network Administrator, Matthew Algie:

“I really enjoy my job here. It never occurred to me that my IT qualification would take me into the food industry so it goes to show that it is an industry that offers great career prospects, not just with dealing direct with the food but also in finance, IT, HR. It’s certainly working out for me.”

Michael Young, Apprentice Engineer, Devro (Scotland) Ltd:

“Companies should offer work placement to pupils to show them the various jobs and opportunities available in the food and drink industry. I am doing a multi-skilled apprenticeship and I love it. The working conditions and the pay are great, and my work colleagues help me with both practical and college work”

Alison Ralph, Accountant, Devro (Scotland) Ltd:

“As an accountant in the food and drink industry, I get to see and be involved with the business from the product being made to being ready on the shelves for purchase. You get to deal with the daily challenges that face a company and use a wider range of skills”

Kirsty Cleaver, Work Placement Student, BBC Runner up Junior Apprentice, Macphie:

“More people would be interested to join the food and drink industry if it was spoken about more widely at school. Not just in the cooking part, but in all areas such as sciences, finance, quality control”.

5. The Scottish food and drink industry is Scotland’s largest manufacturing sector and is a major contributor to Scotland's economy. The sector employs one in five people in manufacturing, and generates annual sales in the region of £7.6bn, providing employment for around 50,000 people. Scotland's first national food and drink policy aims to promote sustainable economic growth by ensuring that the Scottish Government's focus in relation to food and drink addresses quality, health and wellbeing, environmental sustainability, access and affordability.