

Scottish Food Fortnight 6th – 21st September 2008

Last time we sent out our newsletter, Scottish Food Fortnight was fast approaching – and just like that it is all over for another year. What a huge success it was, with over 70 food and drink events taking place throughout Scotland and so many fantastic ways for people to get involved. Whether smoked salmon, cheese or whisky tasting, special set Scottish themed menus, promotional offers on selected Scottish goods, farmers market, farm visits – there was certainly something for everyone and of all ages!

Some of the highlights from SFF...

The Launch... On Friday 5th September, Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, launched the 6th Scottish Food Fortnight at Glamis Castle in Angus. In launching what he called a wonderful showcase of the wonderful food and drink that Scotland has to offer, he announced that demand for Scottish produce has increased significantly in the past year. He said:

“Consumers are becoming increasingly interested in the provenance of what they buy. They want to know where their food comes from and they want to support local producers. Supermarkets recognise this increased demand for Scottish food. I know that one leading supermarket has increased sales of Scottish products in Scotland by 20 per cent and in the rest of the UK by 14 per cent in the last year. The seismic shift in consumers’ preference for Scottish food shows that the public also want to do their bit to support the local producers. “We are also seeing more people grow their own food for their own consumption and for local sale. Food prices are forcing us to turn back the clock and become more self-sufficient.”

Mr Lochhead joined 1000 pupils from a variety of Scottish schools for the launch and also enjoyed a ‘Homecoming Scotland 2009’ dish especially prepared for him by Wendy Barrie of the Scottish Food Guide. To download the recipe please visit www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk

SFF in the Parliament... Once again this year, a number of events were held in the Scottish Parliament to celebrate SFF. Seminars covering areas such as skills shortages in the food and drink sector, issues surrounding local abattoirs and the ‘green’ credentials of Scottish produce. On Weds 17th September, SFF once again took a mini-farmers market right into the heart of Holyrood, allowing MSPs to sample local produce from across Scotland, and talk to producers about their successes and the issues that still concern them.

The Finale... Scottish Food Fortnight culminated on a sunny Sunday in Clackmannanshire with the Scottish Food Fest. A host of well-known chefs gave mouthwatering demonstrations and a great selection of Farmers Market producers did a roaring trade, all with a backdrop of the lovely Ochils, and to the sounds of Central FM.

Still going...

Tarken Tapas Tuesday – special 6 course Scottish tapas at The Four Seasons Hotel, St Fillans Introducing a six course Scottish Tapas priced at £25 in the evening and three course Tapas Lunch at £15. This will be run throughout September and October from 6.00pm – 9.00pm www.thefourseasonshotel.co.uk

And don't forget...

Borders Banquet 2008, which aims to showcase the very best food and drink in the Borders, takes place from **7th -16th November**. A 10-day celebration of the best restaurants, the best chefs and the best locally produced ingredients available in the Scottish Borders. For more information, please visit www.bordersbanquet.co.uk

THE FUTURE OF SCOTTISH FOOD FORTNIGHT...

The organisers of Scottish Food Fortnight were delighted to draw the fortnight to a close with the announcement that its future development has been secured.

Currently organised by the Scottish Countryside Alliance Educational Trust (SCAET), the showcase for Scottish food will next year be taken over by Scotland Food and Drink who have been tasked to provide strategic direction and leadership to the Scottish Food and Drink industry.

Nicola Chalmers-Watson, Director of SCAET said: "This year has been such a success with celebrity chefs, businesses, thousands of children and many communities across Scotland all promoting and enjoying Scottish food and local produce.

"Other highlights include the announcement that the Scottish Government is to support more resources for integration of food and drink into Homecoming Scotland 2009, whilst there was also the launch at Holyrood of the Scottish Countryside Alliance Awards which focus on the exceptional work of individuals and businesses in rural Scotland.

"So we are handing over Scottish Food Fortnight in great shape to Scotland Food and Drink who have the resources and commitment to take the whole event even further. We wish them every success. We will now concentrate on taking the good news about the countryside and local produce to the Scottish public in other innovative ways."

Paul McLaughlin, Chief Executive of Scotland Food & Drink said: "As the industry leadership organization, we are delighted to be taking on the design, co-ordination and delivery of the event in the future. Scottish Food Fortnight provides the food and drink industry with a strong platform to build awareness with consumers about the fantastic industry that exists on their own doorstep as well as encouraging them to interact with local food and drink producers throughout the country."

**The dates for SFF 2009 will be announced in the next couple of weeks –
watch this space!**