

The LOAF Principles



Christian Ecology Link is asking churches to use their 'loaf' and follow one or more of the **LOAF** principles when planning any communal meal like a Harvest Celebration, Alpha Supper or regular church meal. CEL has produced **LOAF** 'placemats' which can be photocopied to provide A4 sheets to go in each person's place. We hope these will stimulate discussion and encourage people to think about our responsibility towards the environment.

Decisions on what food we provide can have far reaching effects and can influence the way food is produced and animals are treated. As the Council for the Protection of Rural England says, 'Changing national and EU farm policy is difficult -- you can make a difference by buying local farm produce.'

Locally produced food means shorter journeys for farm animals to markets and abattoirs, fewer miles travelled from farms to shops and therefore less climate damaging green house gas emissions from lorries, less demand for new roads, support for the local economy and local farmers, and regional variety.

Organically grown food avoids the use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides and artificial fertilisers. Organic cultivation leads to a healthier soil with more organic material, micro-organisms and other wildlife, and no genetically engineered organisms released into the countryside. CEL supports the setting of targets for 30% of UK farmland to be farmed organically by 2010. CEL also supports moves for the rest of the land to be farmed in more sustainable ways such as integrated crop management systems.

Animal friendly means that our fellow creatures, under God, are treated humanely. Organically reared animals are subject to strict welfare regulations, as are the animals sold by the Real Meat Company. Free range eggs and meat are now readily available.

Fairly traded food and drink such as coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas and honey are labelled as such. The 'Fairtrade' label guarantees that when food or drink has to be imported, the overseas workers who produce it get a fair wage. Farmers in the UK also need a fair price for their produce.

A loaf of bread is the staple food for many people. Bread is also full of symbolic meaning for Christians. Jesus blessed and broke bread and gave it to his disciples saying, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' In St John's Gospel Jesus is described as 'The Bread of Life'.

Can you use your **LOAF** to make a difference?

Useful websites:-

Local produce: www.localfood.org.uk/f3/

Organic agriculture: www.soilassociation.org

Farm animal welfare: www.ciwf.co.uk

Fair trade: www.fairtrade.org.uk

CEL: www.christian-ecology.org.uk

