

MULL AND IONA FOOD FESTIVAL 2001



Food Festival Photos

A report to highlight the background and evaluation of the Mull & Iona Food Festival
2001 & potential
for developing the local food economy
in Mull and Iona

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An evaluation report to highlight the background & potential of the Mull & Iona Food Festival 2001

December 2001

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I. PROJECT OUTCOME

- The pilot Food Festival took place in Tobermory during 13th to 18th August 2001
- The event originated from Mull and Iona Community Trust's Primary Producers Project
- The event began as a low key community project with no budget for activities and events
- Argyll and Bute Council awarded funding for a marketing consultant and primary producers project in September 2000.
- The part time marketing consultant was employed in February to direct a programme of events
- The project was driven by local communities who wished to market their produce locally
- Sponsorship and grant funding was sought to provide a working budget for the event programme.
- The event brought 23 organisations together in partnership
- A steering group of primary producers was formed to co-ordinate production across the islands
- A festival steering group was formed to co-ordinate the event, supported by MICT and the marketing consultant
- Activities were co-ordinated across 7 areas on Mull and Iona.
- In excess of 15 businesses contributed to the event
- A handy A4 Producers Directory was distributed to local businesses
- A week long food awareness event involved 14 eating establishments and customer surveys
- A Fàilte award invited tourists to recommend establishments offering best service and product
- A producers market was organised with 20 businesses taking part
- An estimated £4000 turnover was made at the market with all producers satisfied
- Professional cooking competitions were organised and judged by the Scottish Federation of Chefs to demonstrate the quality delivered by island restaurants
- The Scottish Association of Chefs initiated a junior chef competition category for future years
- Cooking competitions were organised to involve the community and to encourage use of local product
- Local potters provided commemorative pottery for the food festival
- Plaques, trophies and prizes were all made locally thus stimulating local economy.

SUMMARY REPORT

Background

The 2001 Isle of Mull and Iona Food Festival (13-18 August) was led by a steering group of Primary Producers, under the direction and supervision of Mull and Iona Community Trust and an appointed freelance Marketing Consultant. At the base of this framework is the broad aim to promote local produce with the concept of *The Taste of Mull and Iona Campaign* – to buy and eat locally grown produce. This concept grew from a first meeting (held in March 2001) of a small group of producers with a shared interest in food issues. The initial aim of the group was to explore the scope of practical actions and networking on food issues in the local area and invite individuals from different sectors to join the expanding group.

The group set itself the task of developing the marketing strategy in support of *The Taste of Mull and Iona*, a motivational campaign focusing on:

- ▶ *Selling local produce to the community (local information and awareness)*

► *Creating the concept and the image of quality grown produce (incentive communication campaign involving posters, brochures, the media and events)*

► *Setting up a steering group (to give purpose and definition to the project).*

The project was funded initially by Argyll and Bute Council. The Festival was then sponsored by Argyll and the Islands Enterprise, the Clydesdale Bank plc (official sponsor), Lighthouse Scotland Ltd, and partially by Argyll and the Isles, and Loch Lomond, Sterling and Trossachs Tourist Board (AILLST).

❑ **Festival objectives**

1. *To raise the profile of local food and maximise the use of local produce*
2. *To launch “ The Taste of Mull & Iona” Producer Market*
3. *To campaign the concept of “ The Taste of Mull & Iona”*
4. *To launch The Taste of Mull and Iona Web site*
5. *To use the Festival as a tester for a future annual event which would promote Mull and Iona as an original food destination.*
- 6.

❑ **Producers Market 18th August 2001 - Tobermory**

- 20 businesses registered for the Producer Market.

- a registration fee of 10% of their sales was charged, in return, producers were given free inclusion in the Festival Programme and Festival Poster and free advertising in a Local Producers leaflet.

- Market's turnover was approximate £4000.

- Visitors numbers had increased

❑ **Festival Programme**

- 11 main events were the highlights of the Festival's Programme, all of which were well attended:

1. Local Producers Market – approx. **1500 people visiting**
2. Barbecue at MacGochans Pub - **200 customers**
3. Let's Get Cooking – Culinary Competition Award – **18 participants**
4. Children's Food Creations – Artistic Exhibition Award- **8 participants**
5. Chocolate Workshop – Tobermory Chocolate Factory – **12 children**
6. Tasting of Biscuits and Sgriob-Ruadh Cheese – at the Island Bakery – **400 customers**
7. The Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the Year Award – **5 participants**
8. Three restaurants proposing Evening Theme Meals, Saturday night in Tobermory – **122 customers**
9. Iona Organic Barbecue with Ceilidh – **180 people participating**
10. *Food Awareness Week*- local restaurants in support of the concept of eating locally grown produce – **14 establishments supporting**
11. Barbie and Boogie and Competitions Prize Giving (Live music and Barbecue food) – **100 people participating**

The number of attendance to the festival is not quantifiable due to a one - day event concentrated in Tobermory during the summer season, when visitors numbers are already high. Bringing people to the area was not a priority for this event, however, this will be a key target for future events.

❑ **Cost and Funding**

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| - Budget Costs forecast | £5,062 |
| - Total Funding | £9,850 |
| - Total Expenditure | £5,598.67 |
| - Total Income | £3,591.70 |

In-kind contributions were made involving 9 businesses who helped with products, material, facilities and time, a detailed list is shown at section 2.

❑ Advertising & Promotion

The main promotional and advertising tools are listed below:

- 30 Festival posters were distributed locally between Mull and Iona, Lochaline and Kilchoan. 20 were distributed regionally in the Highlands and Argyll by the Scottish Tourist Board.
- 6 different promotional initiatives during the *Food Awareness Week* and Festival day (Food tasting, Theme Meals, Workshop, Website)
- 1 press release by the Scottish Tourist board
- 1 press release by MICT

❑ Survey findings

5 different evaluation questionnaires were carried out in anticipation of the future development of the Food Festival.

- 500 General Visitor Surveys to general public during *Food Awareness Week* 113 returned;
- 40 Mull and Iona Food Festival Evaluation Questionnaires to all business, 26 returned;
- 20 Evaluation Questionnaires to Competitors, 7 returned;
- 15 Evaluation Questionnaires to Retailers, 11 returned;
- 15 Evaluation Questionnaires to Producers Market, 7 returned

The information from the evaluation questionnaires reveals that the Festival was considered an important marketing tool *to encourage and educate the local market to buy locally produced food*. Visitors and businesses rated the *quality* and *price* of the local food as average, excellent and very good.

The timing of the 2002 Festival has been recommended for September or October, questionnaires show sufficient support from businesses involved for an autumn date. The questionnaires also suggested that the location of the festival should cover more of the Island rather than seem to focus on Tobermory.

❑ Future Marketing

In terms of future Marketing, the Food Festival should remain an integral part of the “Taste of Mull and Iona Campaign” which aims to promote the concept to eat locally grown produce, an initiative supported by the Primary Producers Steering Group.

The 2002 Food Festival will have to address seasonality, this will require a separate marketing strategy to target two different target markets: residents and visitors.

A more aggressive advertising campaign will need to be ***approached*** early on during the summer. Innovative PR activities, and media attention during the year, will be necessary to ultimately benefit all businesses, and indeed, the overall economy of the Island’s tourism sector.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

As part of Mull and Iona Community Trust's (MICT) economic development strategy, Mull and Iona Food Festival is the result of the marketing strategy planned to develop the Primary Producers and the food sector in the islands of Mull and Iona.

The broad aim is to promote local produce with the concept of "The Taste of Mull and Iona" campaign – to buy and eat locally grown produce.

The Mull and Iona Food Festival was the first one-day event ever realised of this kind. The Festival had the aim to pilot future annual events for the Isle of Mull and Iona and was organised by a steering Committee of local producers, MICT and a marketing consultant.

Initial financial assistance came from Argyll & Bute Council, who funded the Marketing Consultant on a part time basis from February 2001, then sponsored by Clydesdale Bank plc, Lighthouse Scotland Ltd, and partially by AILLST and Argyll and the Islands Enterprise. In direct relation to the Food Festival, two other projects evolved - the Taste of Mull & Iona Web site, and a Food Directory -both of which are still under planning and realisation.

This evaluation of the first Mull and Iona Food Festival will provide a valuable tool to those who will decide on the continuation of a Food Festival initiative during the summer season 2002.

1.2 MICT objectives and methodology

Developing sectorial industries and tourism.

The pilot food festival on Mull and Iona was part of the Primary Producers work identified originally through the Corrom Trust community planning exercises in 1997. It complements the work that Mull and Iona Community Trust is currently doing with the licensed abattoir on Mull, and the proposed new community butcher shop in Tobermory. The three strands represent a ***cluster approach*** to assist the ailing agricultural (and also, fishing) sectors on Mull and Iona (and surrounding areas). The approach ensures that value is added to the sector as a whole.

The objectives are to:

- strengthen essential infrastructure on the islands
- build the local economy and develop local markets
- retain or increase jobs within the food production sectors

Whilst these objectives are primarily social and economic, there are strong environmental considerations which impinge upon food production methods globally, and also develop the local economy through tourism developments. Thus, the continuation of a livestock marketing system on Mull and Iona is absolutely crucial to sustaining the island's unique ecosystem (through conservation of protected species of birds, insects, plants and trees) and accordingly, furthers wildlife and food theme tourism.

The development of these links will provide sustainable solutions in accord with Government policies focused on the goals of; regeneration, community capacity building, inclusion in rural areas, community economic development, and environmental and conservation matters.

1.3 Methodology

The food festival in 2001 was delivered primarily as an event driven by the Community and reflected a "bottom-up" approach. It is thought that the approach on Mull is unique in relation to Food Festivals elsewhere in Scotland. The community was largely represented through primary producers, restaurants, and retailers and also through MICT who took on the role of co-ordinating the event, thus supporting the volunteer organisers. The "bottom up" method was favoured by the Trust, as part of their development remit, and agreed by the majority of producers who felt that they wanted to test local markets, get comment from local consumers on the quality of their product, and they also needed to develop confidence in their product and their ability to meet demand. The approach therefore reflected the relatively local aspirations of most local producers involved in the project. The accepted vision is **to develop, local infrastructure, quality and confidence**, in order to have a project with substance and sustainable outcomes, before moving on to develop external distribution channels and export opportunities (although some local producers are advanced and will continue to develop their own export channels).

1.4 Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a. make recommendations in relation to the rationale, objectives and targets for future festivals;
- b. make recommendations in relation to the management structures for future festivals;
- c. make recommendations in relation to the marketing of future festivals.

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2001 FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Festival targets

MICT's targets for the 2001 Mull and Iona Food Festival were as follow:

- 15 Participating Businesses
- Producer Market launch
- 7 Representatives Participation from all areas

- Local & regional Advertising campaign
- One Launch Pilot Event

2.2 Festival Aims and Objectives

Objectives

The Steering Group agreed the aims and objectives of Mull and Iona Food Festival in March 2001.

The Festival objectives were to:

1. *Raise the profile of local food and maximise the use of local producers*
2. *Launch "The Taste of Mull and Iona" Producer Market*
3. *Campaign "The Taste of Mull and Iona" introducing the concept of a Mull & Iona quality produce brand*
4. *Launch "The Taste of Mull and Iona" Website*
5. *Use the festival as a tester for a future annual event to promote Mull and Iona as an original food destination.*

2.3 Festival Costs and Funding

The approved public sector contributions to the 2001 Food Festival are show below:

| Source of Funds for 2001 Food Festival | Amount |
|---|---------------|
| Argyll & Bute Council | £4,000 |
| Argyll and Islands Enterprises | £2,500 |
| AILLST | £ 350 |
| Clydesdale Bank | £2,000 |
| Lighthouse Scotland Ltd | £1,000 |
| Total Funding | £9,850 |

The approved budget for the 2001 Food Festival was as follow:

| Budget Headings | Amount |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Hire of facilities | £ 860 |
| Event management | £1760 |
| Travel and accommodation | £ 440 |
| Insurance | £ 200 |
| Advertising/promotion | £ 962 |
| Prizes and awards | £ 340 |
| Scottish Federation of Chefs | £ 500 |
| Total Costs | £5062 |

The actual income and expenditure for the 2001 Food Festival was as follows:

| 2001 Food Festival Actual Income and Expenditure | Amount |
|---|---------------|
| Expenditure | |
| Hire of facilities | £ 859.33 |
| Event management | £1934.60 |
| Travel and accommodation | £ 200.45 |
| Insurance | £ 31.50 |
| Advertising/promotion | £1161.26 |
| Prizes and awards | £ 826.53 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Scottish Federation of Chefs | £ 585.00 |
| Total Expenditure | £5598.67 |
| Income (excluding grants) | |
| Sponsorship | £3350.00 |
| Registration fees | £ 107.00 |
| Stall holder fees | £ 134.70 |
| Total Income | £3591.70 |

In-Kind Contributions

The table below provides an estimate of the in-kind or “hidden” contributions that were made to the 2001 Food Festival.

| Organisation | Time /or material |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Lighthouse of Scotland | salmon |
| Hydro Seafoods | salmon |
| Tobermory Fish Co | processing |
| Burn Stewart | whisky |
| Mull Slaughterhouse | facilities for butchering |
| Sgriobh-Ruadh Farm | vac packing and processing |
| Harry Sproat | butchering |
| Forest Enterprise | children's games |
| Local farmers | meat for competitions/caterers |
| Volunteers | chaperoning chefs, over-seeing competitions |
| MICT Staff | |
| All staff | setting up venue |
| All staff | providing signage |
| Project Officer /Administrator | setting up and managing steering group |
| Ranger | monitoring children's games |
| Administrator | packing and labelling meat products |

2.4 The Marketing Consultant

The Marketing Consultant was employed since February 2001 to develop a marketing strategy for Mull and Iona primary producers. In the strategy, the event of a Food Festival was planned as a very effective marketing tool to raise the profile of local producers. Ideally, the realisation of the festival normally requires a Festival Director and their team to take on necessary duties. Despite the fact that the Mull and Iona Food Festival didn't employ a dedicated Director, the challenging tasks were equally well undertaken by the Marketing Consultant with the MICT's team providing the essential framework to make it happen.

The Marketing Consultant directed the Food Festival with the following duties:

- to promote the aims and objectives of the Food Festival,
- to plan and create a balanced and attractive programme of events,
- to book events, dates and venues,
- to include the whole of Mull and Iona with “Food Awareness Week” initiative,
- to design Festival posters and events programmes,
- to organise competitions, do the practical work (questionnaires, prizes and awards etc.) and liaise with catering establishments, participants and other businesses,
- to co-ordinate the marketing,
- to liaise with steering group members over progress meeting,
- to contact the media,
- to report regularly to the project leader from MICT, and

- to film the day's events.

2.5 The project Leader from MICT

The Project Leader has been co-ordinated the Food Festival looking after the fund raising aspect with the following duties:

- to ensure that the Food Festival meets objectives in the Primary Producers project
- to work towards ensuring that the Festival becomes an annual event
- to provide a support framework for the marketing specialist, steering group and others
- to co-ordinate activities in conjunction with the marketing director and administrator
- to develop partnerships across the public and private sectors
- to formulate proposals towards fundraising and apply for project funds
- to liaise with public regulatory agencies e.g. Environmental Health
- to arrange meetings to discuss and agree policy, activities and events
- to involve the community using MICT database, newsletter, contacts
- to support the volunteer organisers
- to act as spokesperson, providing project information to the media.

2.6 The Festival Administrator from MICT

The Festival Administrator had the valuable job of co-ordinating between producers, products and equipment with the following duties:

- to assist at steering group meetings, providing minute service etc
- to provide accurate accounting for the project
- to ensure all information distributed
- to research and hire equipment for vac packing and labelling
- to source meat producers to process animals for producer market
- to supervise butchering, price and pack meat for retail at producer market
- to provide ice and polystyrene boxes for market to comply with health & safety,
- to process paperwork for competitions, producer market entries etc,
- to co-ordinate orders and deliver produce to participating local hotels/restaurants
- to gather information and produce supplier and caterer directories

2.7 Festival Events

A great number of events were highlighted in the Festival's promotional material:

1. Local Producers Market (great attendance)
2. Barbecue – MacGochans Pub (great attendance)
3. “Let’s get cooking” – culinary competition award (8 teams of two)
4. “Children’s Food Creations” – artistic exhibition award (6 participants)
5. Chocolate workshop – Tobermory Chocolate Factory (fully booked)
6. Tasting of Biscuits and Sgriob-ruadh cheese – Island bakery (well attended)
7. Children activities (well attended)
8. “The Isle of Mull Chef of the Year” – Professionals chefs award (5 participants)
9. Barbie and Boogie and Prize Giving (well attended)

Other well attended events included:

- *Food Awareness Week* – a whole week of traditional recipes from the “The Taste of Mull and Iona Dish” (12 catering establishment participating)

Evening theme meals:

- *The Sound of Shellfish* – The Anchorage Restaurant
- *Mull around the Med* – Tobermory Hotel
- *Traditional and Modern Scottish Fare* – Highland Cottage
- *Iona Organic Barbecue with Ceilidh* – Argyll Hotel, Iona

Culinary competitions

The idea behind the culinary competitions was to give the opportunity to the whole community to practically experience a “taste” for local produce by challenging their cooking abilities and creativity.

Different levels of competitions were introduced to attract a wider range of people in the community, they were:

- *Let's get cooking*
- *The Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the Year*
- *Children's food creations*

Lets get Cooking

A “Ready, Steady, Cook” competition format, which attracted an overall number of eight mixed teams. Surprisingly the competition attracted people from all ages: adults, elderly and even some children. The setting at the Home Economics Room in Tobermory High School was a successful and suitable location, allowing the eight teams to take part. Two judges were overseeing the running of the competition.

The event was a success and has the great potential to become an annual event for the community, not only for the adult audience but also for the younger community, encouraging them to appreciate the culinary world and the rewarding satisfaction of cooking.

The Isle of Mull & Iona Chef of the Year

This more professional culinary competition took place thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of four chefs from Tobermory, performing in the most restricted working conditions. Because the Festival took place during high season the timing was unsuitable for these busy working chefs. A number of obstacles had to be surmounted such as being unable to group all the chefs under the same roof. The lack of time and suitable location with cooking stations, was overcome by giving time slots to each respective chef to compete on their own premises. Two judges from the Federation of Chefs Scotland travelled from restaurant to restaurant to oversee the three course meal competition. Performance feedback was given to each chef once they had finished. Unfortunately, the lack of space prevented this competition to be open to the public.

Children's food creations

An artistic exhibition of sculptures made from vegetables proved to be very popular amongst children between six and eight years of age. The quality and creativity of the exhibit was outstanding. The exhibition displays were displayed in An-Tobar Art Centre, however, later that day, the exhibits was moved to the Producer Market for a wider public appreciation..

Local Producer's Market

The Producer Market had the specific aim to raise the profile of all local producers. The number of participating businesses was so great that the abundance of products on display created a positive and promising prospect for future market events. This venue was also used to campaign the concept of “The Taste of Mull and Iona Brand”. Leaflets, with a list of producer's details, were distributed to push the idea of a unique brand and logo for Mull and Iona quality products.

Fifteen businesses registered for the Festival. In return for a 10% commission of the total sales, each producer was given a stall in the Producer's Market, and a free entry in the Festival Programme and the Producer Information leaflet.

The Producer Market was a great success with producers trading from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Many producers sold out after a couple of hours. A great variety of products were on offer, from local meat, fish and shellfish, to delicious home baking, traditional Mull cheese and Tobermory Malt Whisky. The market also launched a special edition of Festival Pottery thanks to the contribution of local potters around the island.

2.8 Promotion

The Festival promotions were:

- Cheese and Biscuits Tasting
- Chocolate workshop
- Traditional recipes
- Evening theme meals
- Food Awareness week
- Launch Primary Producers Website

Public Relations

The bulk of the public relations work for the Food Festival was undertaken between June and July 2001. This was too late for most publications, TV and Radio programmes, which would have required earlier contact to ensure coverage of an August Festival.

The main PR tools were one general press release specially tailored for the media and a number of articles direct to the local community. The task of contacting the media and responding to media enquiries was shared between the Marketing Consultant and the Project Leader from MICT.

The following table summarises the contacts made:

| Media | Contacts | Method of Contact |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Newspapers | The Scotsman, The Sunday Herald, The Oban Times, | General release |
| TV / Radio | Scottish Passport / Out of Doors | General release |
| Specialist / Local Papers | Scotland's Larder, Taste of Scotland, CalMac Magazine / Am Muileach, Round and About, Press & Journal | General release |

The media contacted, expressed a real interest to cover a future event provided this could be presented in time. A list of press articles is provided in Appendix 1.

Section Three Food Festival Survey

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FOOD FESTIVAL SURVEY

3.1 Background

In anticipation of a future development of Mull and Iona Food Festival, it was appropriate to carry out an evaluation questionnaire to gather feedback on the outcome and impact of the pilot Food Festival on businesses, producers, competitors and visitors.

The 2001 *General Visitor Survey* represents the first survey carried out in Mull against the background of a *Food Awareness Week* prior to the Food Festival day on the 18th of August 2001. Due to financial restrictions, there was a delay in this questionnaire being circulated earlier in the summer. Although the time span was not ideal to gather enough responses, the overall results exceeded expectations.

The scope of the *Mull & Iona Food Festival Survey* was extended to include all the people who had actively taken part in the event (businesses, producers, competitors), with the primary objective to learn and build upon their experiences.

3.2 Methodology

1. General Visitor Survey

In order to attain relevant and necessary information for the Evaluation Report, the questionnaire was distributed during *Food Awareness Week* by all the catering establishments committed to support the promotion of local food within the event. The questionnaire was printed on the reverse of a competition leaflet with the added incentive of a prize draw. This method secured a higher level of interest and proved to be successful.

2. Mull & Iona Food Festival Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire was sent to businesses, competitors and producers. The response was not as high as expected, therefore, the quantity of the research is not enough to base any solid decision regarding a Future Event. However, it contains very interesting and original viewpoints that should be valued and considered when planning the next Food Festival.

During the research analysis, numbers in brackets () will be used to indicate the number of people that have agreed to the same question. A full account of the research scoring can be seen in appendix no. 3.

3.3 Objective of the research

The objectives of this research are as follow:

• **General Visitor Survey**

In order to identify visitors' origin, accommodation and catering, for future marketing purposes, the questionnaire also aimed to assess the level of awareness of local produce from Mull and Iona.

• **General Evaluation Questionnaire to Businesses, Producers and Competitors**

In order to collect views from those who played a large role within the Festival, a total of 40 people were sent a Food Festival evaluation questionnaire. This questionnaire included a general survey sheet, with specific questions on the future approach with regard to the aims and objectives and marketing of the event. Only 26 questionnaires were returned.

• **Evaluation sheet for Cooking Competition's participants**

In order to give competitors the opportunity to feedback on the running of both competitions, *Let's get cooking* and *Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the Year*, 20 Evaluation sheets were sent to all competitors: 16 for *Let's get cooking* and 4 for *Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the Year*. Only seven evaluation sheets were returned.

• **Evaluation sheet for Retailers for Food Awareness Week**

Catering Establishments played a very important role during *Food Awareness Week*. They acted as direct promoters in support of the concept of eating locally grown produce by adding traditional recipe 'specials' to their menus. This led to two competitions open to these participating establishments - 'Failte on Mull and Iona' and 'The Taste of Mull & Iona Dish'. Evaluation sheets were sent to 15 participating businesses. Eleven were returned.

• **Evaluation sheet for Producers Market**

The Primary Producers were the main benefactors of this marketing tool, and their presence at the Producer Market boosted great confidence amongst the community. The Producer Market, above all, highlighted the variety and the quality of the local produce available. Producers were sent evaluation sheets to assess the event but also to give them the opportunity to underline their aims and objectives for a Producer Market, in addition, its marketing approach and the prospect of a "Mull and Iona Brand" initiative. Fifteen evaluation sheets were sent only seven were returned

3.4 Main Findings

• **General Visitor Survey**

The bulk of the visitors sampled were visiting the area from England (more than half), followed by Scotland and few foreign countries.

Almost 40% were people *staying* in Self-catering and other kind of accommodations (camping, boat) followed by Hotels and then B&B. Visitors enjoy *eating out* at least three or more times during their staying, with the majority preferring to go to a restaurant, and local residents (only 16 in this sample) usually going out three times or more during the whole year.

Local food quality was rated 'very good' by 50% however 70% of visitors would like to see more variety of local produce on the menu. Equally, **price** does not affect choice; in fact 50% rated the price of eating out as 'very good'. On the other hand, the majority of the people sampled would only spend between £15 and £19 for a three-course dinner.

• **General Evaluation Questionnaire to Businesses, Producers and Competitors**

An evaluation sheet was sent to a sample of 40 people, 26 responses were received.

The sample was asked to identify key aims and objectives for the Mull and Iona Food Festival from a list of 6 that they believe the Festival should have.

24 people chose the same two from the list, they are as follows:

- To encourage and develop local food businesses
- To promote, encourage and educate the local market to buy local food produce

The Festival Programme offered a wide variety of events, however, most respondents gave their preferences on what they would include with an appropriate budget, top preferences went to *Producer Market* (19) and *Cookery demonstrations* (13) followed by *Children's events* and *Free Food Tasting*.

They were questioned on what other kinds of activities should be included with an adequate budget. It was found that *Festival Posters* were the top choice, followed by *Festival Programme leaflet*, joint marketing with existing tourism businesses and *Festival promotional item* were chosen equally. Independent *PR consultancy* and *Joint marketing accommodation packages* were less popular.

The Food Festival was believed to have an important role to play in the overall development of the local food market (19) supported by the development of a local Food Directory (20).

Opinions were asked on the basis of the *place, duration and time of year* a Food Festival should take place: *Autumn* (11) and *Spring* (9) were the most popular choices. In terms of the duration of the Festival respondents were divided mainly between two choices *1 week* (8) and *2 days* (6) whilst the *place* should fluctuate between all the major villages on the islands.

● *Evaluation sheet for Competition's competitors*

Sixteen evaluation sheets were sent out to all competitors of cooking competitions, seven were received back.

Of those evaluation sheets returned, very positive responses were received from all competitors. Respondents would participate again to a future competition, consequently they would like to see cooking competitions as part of the Food Festival event. Constructive feedback was given requesting, for example, an element of surprise for the community competition (*Let's get Cooking*). Likewise, professional chefs remarked on the Mystery Baskets introduction, suggested holding the *Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the Year* cooking competition and *Lets get Cooking* at the same venue, this would enable more spectators to attend.

● *Evaluation sheet for Retailers for "Food Awareness Week"*

With eleven respondents to the evaluation sheets, the feedback was representative of the majority of the businesses involved.

Questions focused on the *Food Awareness Week* promotional idea. This was rated *Excellent* (6) *Good* (3) *Very good* (1). Future participation to this initiative was welcomed by 9 people, one person (responsible for organising Iona events) was disappointed by the lack of advertising and consequently responded negatively to future participation. 8 businesses confirmed that their customers enjoyed the promotion.

Since the catering establishments are the main promoters for local products, questions were asked about the *quality and price* of local produce.

Respectively *quality* was rated: *Excellent* (5)

Very good, (3)

Good (1)

, whilst *price* was rated *Good* (4)

Excellent

Poor (2)

Average (10).

● *Evaluation sheet for Producers Market*

Eight responses came from the primary producers all agreeing that the Food Festival has/would facilitate producers from Mull and Iona to promote themselves.

The evaluation sheet concentrated mainly on a few points about the running and the marketing of Producer Markets. Three main aims and objectives stand out:

To promote both variety and quality of produce available from the Mull and Iona(8)

To open up new markets for local producers, allowing them to sell their produce direct to consumers (6),

To promote viability and prosperity in Mull & Iona (5).

From a marketing stand *to promote producer market* the majority of respondents have agreed by choosing:

Personal contacts, producers recruiting other producers in the area (7),

Promotion of a producer's information leaflet through the market (6)

Participation in food exhibition and other national markets (4).

The evaluation shows that *producers would participate (at least once a month) to markets trough out the year* (5).

Producers were also asked if they would associate their products with a future

Taste of Mull and Iona Brand,

5 agreed

1 didn't know what that involved

2 abstained.

Section Five

SWOT ANALISIS

Page

Content

4.1 SWOT ANALISIS

Strengths

- the Festival's strong attachment to local producers
- Mull and Iona variety of local products
- the popularity of Mull and Iona as a tourism destination
- the great choice of good quality restaurants
- high level of local businesses support
- steering group commitment to the Festival's aims and objectives
- great varieties of events for one day
- positive response from local community to competitions
- community led initiative

Weaknesses

- geographically difficult to involve all areas of Mull and Iona in one day
- limited funding sources arrived at a later stage
- lack of producers' infrastructure, i.e. meat packaging machinery, low manpower
- the busiest time of the year for producers
- great demand on management time
- advertising campaign not fully exploited due to late funding
- not suitable market place

Opportunities

- Festival support by public agencies
- to partner with one main, or few, sponsors
- extend Festival's event to one week to cover the whole of Mull and Iona
- improve the quality of events to target visitors from mainland
- joint marketing and PR with other local or regional events and businesses
- stimulate media interest building upon the novelty of the event
- a means to extend tourism season choosing a week during 'shoulder' months

Threats

- competitions from other food festivals
- inadequate producer infrastructure
- short term funding

Section Six OUTLINE OF OTHER FOOD FESTIVALS

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Content

6.1 OUTLINE OF OTHER FOOD FESTIVALS

| Name | Timing | Profile |
|--|------------------|---|
| Perth Food Festival | April | <p>Established in 1991 by a local chef, then run by local hoteliers and independent contractors. This year will be managed by a steering group of District Hoteliers Association with the financial help of the Scottish Enterprise of Tayside.</p> <p>The aim of the Festival is to promote the highly talented chefs in the area and the quality local food.</p> <p>The festival lasts for 10 days and runs several categories of awards which are sponsored by local businesses. Producers markets, food fare, and competitions are the focus of this Festival.</p> |
| Orkney Food Festival | September | <p>Based on a pilot event organised in 1996 then it was established in 1999 as a regular annual Food Festival.</p> <p>Managed by Orkney Quality Food & Drinks and Orkney Tourist Board.</p> <p>The main aim is to promote Orkney quality products and give visitors and local residents a taste of the Islands' quality food.</p> <p>The festival runs over seven days, with a series of theme meals, competitions and free tasting; also the occasion for awards to businesses in recognition of outstanding effort in the promotion of Orkney produce.</p> |
| Skye & Lochalsh Food Festival | September | <p>Based on localised pilot scheme in Portree in 1998 it was then established in 1999 as a regional event.</p> <p>Organised by SALE and a Food and Drink Project Officer in 1999.</p> <p>In 2000/01 the Festival was run by an external company (Skye & Lochalsh Food & Drinks Partnership) and a working committee.</p> <p>The Festival was established as a primary marketing tool and a sales channel for the Island's produce.</p> <p>The festival runs over seven days, with a series of community events, competitions, tasting, tours, dances and celebrity chefs' demonstrations.</p> |

Section Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

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CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Festival rationale
- 7.2 Festival performance against targets
- 7.3 Business satisfaction
- 7.4 Visitor satisfaction
- 7.5 Comparison with other Festivals
- 7.6 Overall assessment

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.7 Festival objectives
- 7.8 Festival targets
- 7.9 Festival Funding?
- 7.11 Future Marketing

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Festival Rationale

Mull and Iona can claim to have quality and a variety of local produce second to none. By strengthening essential infrastructure within the food production sector, the Food Festival could become a major promotional tool to benefit both the Food and Tourism sector. During this pilot exercise, catering establishments have clearly welcomed this event by supporting *Food Awareness week*, and the opportunity to put them in direct contact with the supplier.

The core of this festival was to facilitate a link between consumer and supplier, not only with the event but also starting initiatives such as a Food Directory and a Web Site, however both of these projects are still at the planning stage.

7.2 Festival performance against targets

The Mull and Iona Food Festival 2001 met all targets set by MICT's as follow:

| | | Target | Performance |
|--|----------------|---------------|---|
| □ Participating Business | 15 | | 20 |
| □ Producer Market launch | 1 | | 1 |
| □ Representatives Participation from all areas | 7 | | 16 |
| □ Advertising campaign | local/regional | | local /very limited regional distribution |
| □ One Launch Pilot Event | 1 | | 1 |

7.3 Business Satisfaction

Support from catering establishments and primary producers for the aims and objectives of the Festival remains strong. While hoteliers' businesses have responded to the promotional initiative (*Food Awareness Week*) as an opportunity to support more effectively local produce to their clients, producers have valued the Producer Market as a means to promote themselves directly to the public. Although no real economic value can yet be identified, it was felt that the market has brought to them a unique Public Relations opportunity.

7.4 Visitor satisfaction

Rating on food quality and food price was very good. The questionnaire highlighted that people are willing to spend between £15 and £19 for a three-course meal. An encouraging result considering that the visitors sampled eat out at least three times or more, during their vacation, and that restaurants are the most frequented place for eating out.

7.5 Comparison with other Festivals

Most of the other national Food Festivals appear to have been initiated with the support of at least one main public body, or local authority, who then contract independent people to assist with the Festival management. There is evidence that some Festivals have started at first with a pilot event, which helped for planning, and many are now an annual and well established event.

Mull and Iona Food Festival is the first to have been initiated as a community driven event. This pilot event had the specific purpose to test the potential and the commitment of the local Producers and to profile their products. Although the food processing infrastructure has proven to be the main weakness to deliver and satisfy demand, on the other hand, the quality and variety of local food presented at the Producer Market has relayed confidence to the consumer, who has welcomed the possibility of easy access of more local produce by the means of Producer Markets and a future Food Directory.

7.6 Overall Assessment

The Festival initiative generated, primarily, from the need to promote the local primary producers to the community, and it was conceived as the main marketing tool by a steering group of producers who initially got together to share food issues.

The accomplishment of the Food Festival was due to the work and commitment of the producers, local community and the administrative support of the MICT.

In addition, the Festival has shown great potential to strengthen the networking between hotelier businesses and producers, through promotional initiatives such as *Food Awareness Week*. It has shown to be very successful not only for the catering establishments but also for their customers, who have enjoyed a week of local produce celebration.

The Festival can claim to be a community driven event which has no precedent, an example from which Mull and Iona will learn and build upon for future planning, and hopefully, that will give other small communities the necessary encouragement and support within a similar environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.7 Festival Objectives

The objectives of the Festival should principally focus as follows

1. To raise the profile of local food and maximise the use of local produce within Mull and Iona
2. To promote the concept of “the Taste of Mull and Iona” through the introduction of a brand that groups a variety of products under the same umbrella as a mark of excellence.
3. To promote Mull and Iona as original food destination and address seasonality by holding the Festival during shoulder months.

7.8 Festival Targets

One of the main targets that should be prioritised during the planning of the event, is the representation of all main areas around Mull and Iona. The Festival programme will need to include a variety of events spread around the main villages for the duration of a week. This length of time would give enough scope to represent each main village with significant and diverse events that would appeal to the residents and visitors touring the island. However, to create a Festival atmosphere, and to avoid the Festival to become too dispersed, the event should maintain a central point where information and displays should attract attention and promote the Food Festival celebration.

A touring producer market (equipped with proper outdoor stalls) should function as a mobile advertising tool for all producers by reaching all visitors and residents of Mull and Iona. Local products' promotion, and the contact with the public, should be considered a valuable opportunity for feedback and networking. This year, the businesses participating were exceptionally high (15) representing the majority of producers. The 2002 Festival will need to attract the same number of businesses and aim to recruit the remaining producers spread across Mull and Iona, by doing so, businesses could have the option to choose where and when to attend the market during the Festival season.

Addressing seasonality by using the Food Festival to bring more visitors during shoulder months of September or October. Joint promotional initiative within the hospitality and the catering sector (special accommodation packages, theme meals, theatre discounts etc.) would bring a profitable opportunity to both parties with extra business during quieter months, and additional advertising by being included in the overall marketing strategy for the Festival.

Consequently to make sure that visitors are targeted in time, a more aggressive advertising campaign would need to be adopted early on during the summer. Dates of the 2002 Food Festival should have been already confirmed and relevant tourism publications advertisements already booked.

7.9 Future Marketing

The Mull and Iona Food Festival 2001 was followed by a freelance marketing consultant employed by the MICT with the aim to provide marketing advice to the Primary Producers Steering Group.

The marketing of the Food Festival should be an integral part of the overall marketing strategy for the “Taste of Mull and Iona Campaign”, which aims to promote the concept to eat locally grown produce supported by the Primary Producers Steering Group. The Festival should not lose the community input, therefore, the Primary Producers should still be at the core of the Steering Committee to make sure that relevant and updated information about the local food sector is fed through.

Once funding and management is in place, a marketing plan will be one of the first tasks to tackle. A broader approach will be required to cover the target market, this time including visitors and residents.

Each target market will need to be addressed differently using appropriate marketing tools. Residents were very enthusiastic about the idea of an annual food celebration. In fact community competitions such as the *Let's get cooking* and *The Isle of Mull and Iona Chef of the year* are now dates within residents calendars.

The simple rationale behind these competitions is to stimulate, particularly the younger generation, interest on local food. For example, cooking demonstrations by the winner of the *Chef of the Year* has already taken place at Tobermory High School as part of a Cooking Project linked with the Food Festival.

The cooking demonstrations, food tasting, theme meals, tours, and the Producers Market were very popular. According to the survey, residents would like to see the continuation of events such as these.

From a visitor's point of view, the marketing approach will require Public Relations activities and closer media attention building on the novelty of the event. Having contacted the producers of Scottish Passport last year, there was a real scope for this "secret island" to be targeted to feature in the future as an original holiday destination for an autumn break.

Festival corporate identity with an identifiable logo will be one of the priorities from the early stage of planning, this would make marketing material and advertising campaign identifiable.