

Pasture for Life Tasting Events



Why do a Tasting Event?

- Tasting events are fun to host and give consumers an opportunity to discover how flavoursome Pasture for Life meat is. Once tasted, never forgotten!
- They are an excellent promotional activity which can help increase your customer following and sell more of your meat
- They help to promote the Pasture for Life brand, by demonstrating how an animal's diet influences meat quality and taste

What is needed to make a successful event?

- Having meat samples from different farms allows comparison to be made and the differences in taste explored
- Invite other PFLA certified farmers to come who are happy to provide the meat (usually free of charge) and who will speak on the night
- A pleasant venue, where the meat can be cooked and presented well
- An event organiser/venue manager who can help organise ticket sales (if sold), make sure everything is in place and encourage people to come along
- Press and publicity so that the benefits of holding the event go much further than just the evening itself

- If using the event to find new markets think about inviting local chefs, publicans, butchers – people you want to impress or warm sales leads

How to start?

- Find a local venue that would be able to hold the event and decide on a date
- Discuss with the manager or chef your objectives for the evening. Decide which cuts of meat will be presented, ie fast or slow cook
- Encourage the venue manager to work out the price to be charged and who will be responsible for selling the tickets. Use both of your networks to invite people
- Invite a good journalist, magazine or local paper to be present as this helps put the publicity in place. Perhaps ask a few along, as one or two may not be able to come at the last minute. Journalists should be invited free of charge
- Source the farmers and their meat and tell them your precise needs, in terms of cut and hanging time etc. There should be as much consistency as possible between the different cuts – bearing in mind there will be a difference due to breed, age and where the animal grazed. Having up to four different animals offers a good selection
- You may feel that having a grain-fed animal to compare is a good idea. However, when we have done this it tends to overcomplicate the discussion. There will always be real differences between Pasture for Life meats to discuss
- The tasting can be carried out around a whole meal with vegetables on the table, or it can be more of a straight tasting between the different pieces of meat. With the latter, it is best to have a good palette cleanser for people to eat between the meats, such as a fresh, light green salad
- Plan well ahead to allow for hanging times for animals (four weeks or more) and keep up the communication with everyone to ensure this all goes to plan
- Prepare Tasting Notes and descriptions of each of the farms to be given to guests on the evening. A sample is attached to this document as well as a blank template. This takes some effort to complete but is well worth while – particularly if there are journalists coming



The Event itself

- It is a good idea to logo up the venue with a Pasture for Life banner. This helps with photos and publicity. PFLA can send you a banner to

borrow, or if there is a group of you it might be worth investing in one that can be used on other occasions. Pull-up ones are available through the PFLA Office at £100 each

- Start at between 6.30 to 7pm. It works well to have an introductory drink (possibly sponsored by a local producer) and allow time for people to mingle and talk.



- You need a compere who is going to be in charge, set the atmosphere and encourage good tasting and discussion
- Start with a brief introductory talk about Pasture for Life, the provenance of the meat and the benefits of a grass-only diet to consumers and farmers
- Introduce the farmers and ask each one to talk in turn briefly (five minutes maximum) about their farming, their meat, and what they see are the benefits of Pasture for Life. Serve the meat from that farm after each farmer speaks and leave 15 minutes for people to eat and think
- We have always encouraged diners to find words to describe the meat they are eating. We are all used to thinking about descriptive words for wine etc, but it is new to think about meat flavours and textures. For example, smooth, herby, nutty etc.

To help with this use a flipchart or post-it notes to write the words on and stick these on the wall. Invite people to think of words. They may be slow to start but will gather pace as the evening progresses. Here are some of the words conjured up at one of our hogget tastings:

| Cotswold | Swaledale | Herdwick | Black Mountain |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Soft | Earthy | Rich | Liquorice |
| Subtle | Rugged | Working lamb | Browner |
| Good texture | More texture | More lamby | Buttery |
| Mille-feuille | Stoney flavour | Herbal | Muttony |

Butter
Caramelly
Flakey
Stratified

Gamey
Solid salt

Aromatic
Short taste
Musky
Nutty
Smooth
Deep

Long flavour
Tabacco
Complex
Robust

- Then bring in the chef. Ask him or her on how the meat was cooked and their views on how it looked and handled when it was raw and as it cooked. How did it taste to him/her?
- Invite people to ask questions of the farmer. There is often an interesting discussion on any number of aspects of how the animals were raised. This allows you and the farmers to reinforce the benefits of Pasture for Life meat.

Please let the PFLA office know (tel: 01285 889853/ email: info@pfla.org.uk) if you are doing a Tasting Event, as we are very happy to support with further advice, publicity and networking to people who might also be interested in attending.

You can also find inspiration by watching a video of a recent tasting the PFLA did at a cookery school in London

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuPUTnn-sxQ>

After the tasting event it is a good idea to keep the guests informed and keep reminding them of Pasture for Life produce.

Encourage them to find and follow Pasture for Life on Facebook and Twitter (@pastureforlife) and ask them to sign up to the Pasture for Life e-newsletter on the Pasture for Life website www.pastureforlife.org

Finally – enjoy the event! There is much reward to be had from feeding appreciative people amazing food, while really making them think a bit more about the meat they eat.