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## Catherine Gazzoli - A Minute on the Clock

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Catherine Gazzoli is the chief executive of Slow Food UK, the British arm of the global non-profit organisation that promotes the use and protection of locally-produced food and regional cooking. Slow Food is celebrating its 20th anniversary this month. Gazzoli spoke to *Kerstin Kühn*.

### **Caterer** What is Slow Food all about?

**Catherine Gazzoli** Slow Food is about the universal right that good, clean and fair food should be available for everyone. Good, because food should taste good; clean, because it should be produced in a way that fully respects the environment, human health and animal welfare; and fair, because the workers at all stages of production should be paid a fair

and honest wage.

We have a presence in 132 countries in the world but in the UK it's a bit more difficult to make slow food accessible to people of all demographics. While farmers' markets are starting to become more popular, supermarkets still dominate the market and they don't really promote local producers.

Article continues below

### **Caterer** What is the difference between slow food and locally produced food?

**CG** Slow food is about thinking about the story; it's more complex than locally produced food. For instance, a product may be locally grown but if the people employed to harvest it are from Eastern Europe and aren't paid a decent wage, it isn't slow food because it isn't fair.

### **Caterer** How do you promote slow food?

**CG** There's no advertising and we don't really promote it as such - it promotes itself as the people in the network get the word out there. We run events to give a window to the producers. For instance, we have the Slow Food Pavilion at the BBC Good Food Show, where some of our members can exhibit free of charge and get the chance to reach a bigger market.

### **Caterer** How can hospitality operators benefit from joining Slow Food UK?

**CG** We do a lot of work with restaurants around the globe and have started to look at this in the UK. We run a project called the Ark of Taste, which is designed to ensure that indigenous foods and production methods don't get lost. We're talking to restaurateurs including Sir Terence Conran and Peter Prescott about saving old English ingredients such as red grouse or Three Counties perry. We also have a lot of high profile chefs supporting us including Angela Hartnett, Jamie Oliver, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Tom Kitchin and Simon Wright.

### **Caterer** Are too many chefs jumping on the local produce bandwagon without putting their money where their mouth is?

**CG** Yes, there's an awful lot of that going on. I recently saw chef Oliver Rowe and he had a black eye. He explained that he had seen a truck with branding promoting local produce, but when he spoke to the drivers they said they weren't really using local produce and it was just a way to make more money. Oliver got really upset, challenged them and ended up with a black eye.

**Slow Food UK is offering an exclusive £10 off membership to Caterer readers, which is usually £35 for individuals and £45 for a family. To sign up visit [www.slowfood.org.uk](http://www.slowfood.org.uk) and enter the promotional code GFS384. Offer ends 4 January 2010.**

**Source:** CatererSearch

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