

Western Isles Forum of Tenant and Resident's Associations

2011

Barra Healthy Eating Report



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WIFTRA

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Healthy Eating on Barra

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Background

As part of their continuing commitment to the isles, Scottish Co-op built a £1m superstore on Barra, creating six new jobs. Built opposite the community school the store has an excellent central position within Castlebay. There is no doubt that construction of the 3,500 sq ft store has itself boosted the local economy, but how has it boosted the supply of fresh healthy options for the residents of one of Scotland's remotest communities? The new store is almost double the size of the old Castlebay Co-op and should provide a much wider selection of goods than were available before.

Method Summary

This report is WIFTRA's response to the increasing concern about the quality and availability of fresh healthy food options on the Isle of Barra amongst HHP's tenants, however due to the replies received to the first survey it was decided to offer the survey to as many on Barra as possible.

The preparation for a survey of this type was to set up questionnaires which would be available to download, complete online and by post and email. A total of one hundred postal forms were sent out to HHP tenants and a selection of local addresses the form was also emailed to residents of Barra on the email list. The online survey was hosted by Survey Monkey and advertised in the local press.

The postal returns were slightly disappointing (32%) but not inconsistent with this type of survey. The emailed responses were higher at 58% and the online survey attracted 115 completions from Barra. A total of 203 people returned surveys which for a small area such as Barra are excellent and well above average for a non-reward survey. The evidence base was self-contained and the survey totally blind with no addresses being logged.

Of the 203 returns all forms had all multiple choice questions answered with 135 answering the supplementary questions. There were no blank returns and no spoiled or unusable returns. This is extremely unusual in a blind survey, and is probably due to the strength of feeling the subject evoked.

The online survey consisted of ten tick box questions eight of which provided purely numerical data (appendix 1), the other two questions provided a comments box with a directed question (appendix 2). All returns filled in the numerical data with 135 answering one or both of the supplementary information questions. The mixed question where a tick box and a supplementary box were provided was the least answered question this was probably due to it only being pertinent to those who never shop on Barra.

Results Data:

- **Question 1- Do you try to eat healthily?**

Not unexpectedly the majority (97%) answered yes to this question, this shows there is a real desire amongst Barra residents to choose healthy options when available. This will be explored in more depth later in the report.

- **Question 2 – Do you try to shop locally?**

Perhaps less expectedly only 66% of respondents said they *tried* to shop locally, this showed that a surprisingly large proportion of people had either given up shopping locally or had never shopped locally. Again this will be explored in greater detail later in the report. Local was defined as in the boundaries of the Isle of Barra.

- **Question 3 – Where do you do most of your food shopping?**

A number of choices were given:

1. Coop Barra – 49%
2. Coop Uist - 21%
3. MacLennan's- 7%
4. Stornoway – 1%
5. Tesco Oban- 12%
6. Other - 10%

From the above data it would seem that although willing to shop locally many did not do the bulk of their food shopping at the Barra Coop. The range of options given and the chance to give alternative options shows that the respondents had the opportunity to cover all the options available. The relatively high percentage (28%) travelling to Uist for the bulk of their food shopping may flag up a problem with the local store. This will again be discussed later in the report (Question 8).

- **Question 4 – How often do you go shopping?**

A number of choices were given:

1. Monthly – 9%
2. Weekly - 22%
3. Most days-66%
4. Every day-3%

The frequency of shopping is of course related to where the shopping is done, with the regular shoppers (3,4) probably shopping locally (69%). This question was designed to show how often people visited the shops, and the reason for every day being so low became apparent in later questions. This spread is consistent with earlier questions with those less regular shoppers (1,2) probably shopping further afield.

- **Question 5 - If you don't mostly shop on Barra what is the main reason?**

Again a number of choices were given:

1. Not enough of the things I need.- 32/40
2. Freshness of produce is a problem.- 30/40
3. It is too expensive. – 18/40
4. Other. – 9/40

This question was aimed at the percentage who did not shop on Barra and was answered by forty respondents (26%). The main points were directed at quality and quantity of range rather than price being the main reason for shopping away from Barra this is borne out by the results of further questions discussed later in the report. The respondents who used the "other" option mainly used it to reiterate the lack of freshness and the quality of the goods on sale or the lack of choice. These will be listed in the appendices at the end of this report.

- **Question 6 – Do you buy food shopping online?**

Again a number of choices were given:

1. Rarely/never – 75%
2. Sometimes - 14%
3. Mostly - 9%
4. Always - 2%

This question was designed to see if the popularity of the Tesco order and collect service could be a factor in respondents shopping away from Barra. The results show that although a factor it is not as strong a factor as may have been thought. The reason for this may be the discontinuation of the service where a box of groceries could be bought online and sent through on the ferry for £5, the reasons for this service ending are unclear.

- **Question 7 – When you buy fruit, vegetables and meat what do you prefer to buy?**

Three options were given:

1. Fresh. Fruit (74%) – Vegetables(68%) – Meat(77%)
2. Frozen. Fruit (3%) - Vegetables(21%) – Meat(17%)
3. Tinned. Fruit (13%) – Vegetables (11%) – Meat(6%)

This shows an overwhelming preference for fresh produce over tinned or frozen, this would tie in with the wish to eat as healthily as possible. The figures above are what people prefer to buy the reality of what is available is often at odds with this as was seen in question 5, and was the main driver for question 8.

- **Question 8 – What don't you like about your LOCAL shopping experience?**

Again local was within the Isle of Barra. This was a totally unprompted question allowing respondents who replied to give as few or as many reasons as they felt appropriate. Over 70% of respondents answered this question with only 0.6% of answers being positive. The most common dislikes are:

1. Freshness of produce 92% of respondents claimed stock was often very close to its sell by date when it arrived with some (22%) even saying it was not unusual to find stock past its sell by date still on the shelf.
2. Choice and variety, 88% of respondents felt that there was a distinct lack of choice especially in fresh food and that too much of the store was set aside to snacks and alcohol (56%). The main provisions were not reordered often enough (52%) and when something good came in it was not seen again for months and was difficult to get staff to reorder.
3. Size of store. 73% of respondents commented that they felt the store was actually too small with 43% commenting it was smaller than they had expected.
4. You had to get there early or miss out, 62% felt that the deliveries were timed wrong with people who were working disadvantaged or that not enough stock was delivered to last the whole day. 32% said they felt the Coop was not living up to its own promise that "Every day is a shopping day".
5. The helpfulness of the staff, 42% felt the staff especially management were either unhelpful or unapproachable.
6. 40% were disappointed in the stock control and floor plan of the store, with 28% saying it was badly laid out or was too full off stuff you don't need/use.
7. 35% of respondents were disappointed at the cleanliness of the store and 30% had said it was not unusual to find rotting fruit and vegetable amongst the stock.

The full list of responses to this question will be in the appendices at the end of this report.

- **Question 9 – Do you get a say in the types of food available in your LOCAL store?**

There were three options:

1. Yes – 3%
2. No – 91%
3. Don't know – 6%

This question was to test the input customers FEEL they have into what is sold in their local store. The high percentage of respondents saying no shows a definite problem in community communication. This is probably borne out by the number of respondents who find the staff unapproachable, it may be that with a little encouragement this perception could be dispelled.

- **Question 10 – Do you think your LOCAL shop provides healthy food and drink choices for its customers?**

Three options:

1. Very healthy. – 2%
2. Quite healthy. – 54%
3. Not healthy. – 45%

This question again was really to give respondents the chance to flag up problems with getting healthy foods. The word quite is rather a subjective word but taken with the comments to question 8 and question 1 it shows that although people try to eat healthily it is difficult due to lack of choice. "If you want to eat healthily on Barra you have to eat the same thing every day" was probably the most telling comment and I think shows that although healthy options may be available the variety of these options is a problem.

Conclusion:

Healthy eating on the Isle of Barra whilst not impossible is extremely difficult, and has not really been improved by the new Coop store to the extent that people had hoped. There are a number of really serious issues flagged in this report that the Coop really needs to address:

1. The variety and choice of fresh produce. The Coop really needs to look at increasing the variety of fresh produce in its Barra store, either by better stock management or by increasing the number of deliveries.
2. The Coop needs to look at the floor plan of the store to make better use of the available space, or even whether the store is big enough for the community it serves.
3. More community input into what the store stocks, this could be by having questionnaires available for customer feedback or through the local community groups.
4. The range of produce must reflect the customer base, for example vegetarians, diabetics and those with coeliac problems have very little choice within the store.
5. The over stocking of unhealthy snacks and ready meals may be contributing to the lack of choice. They may be selling well because there is no choice rather than because they are popular.

Further Information

Further copies of this report or a large print version can be obtained from the forum. All information and text are for public use but please credit the author when citing or quoting from this report.

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About WIFTRA.org:

Wiftra are the umbrella organisation covering all of the tenant and resident's groups within the Western Isles. We are part of the Regional Network and feed into national and UK wide organisations. We have prepared reports for many organisations including Hebridean Housing Partnership and the Scottish Government.

Want to know more go to:

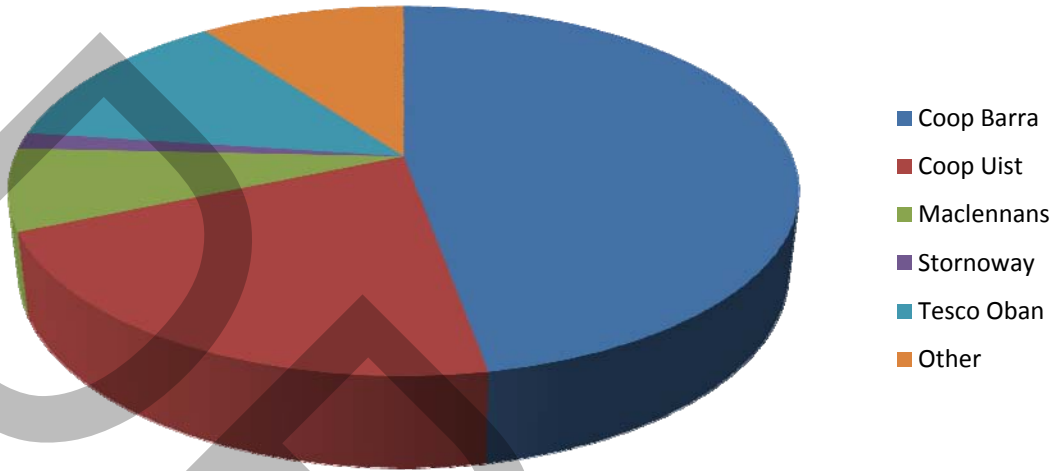
<http://www.wiftra.org> or contact Kevin@wiftra.org.

Appendix 1.

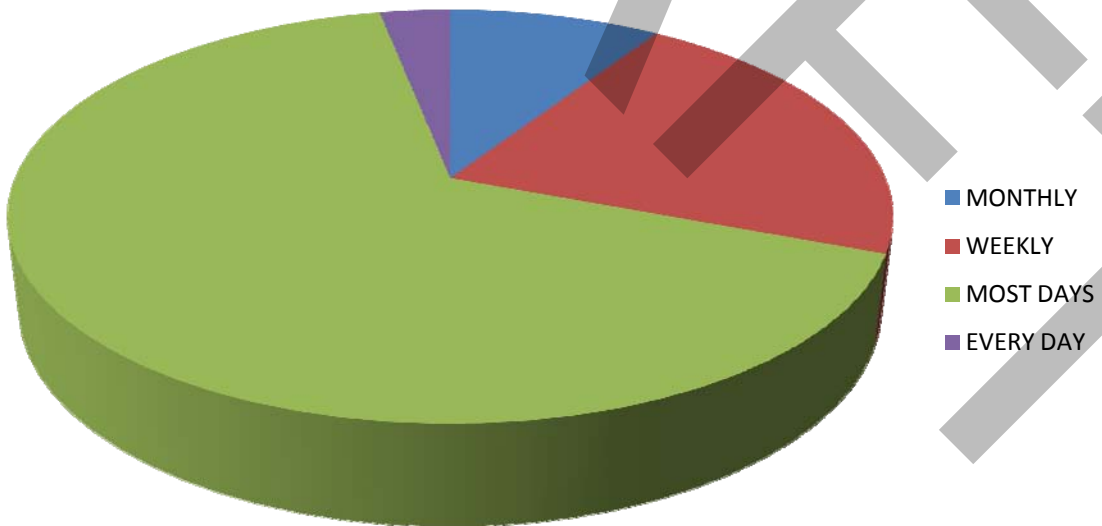
Graphical results for numerical questions.



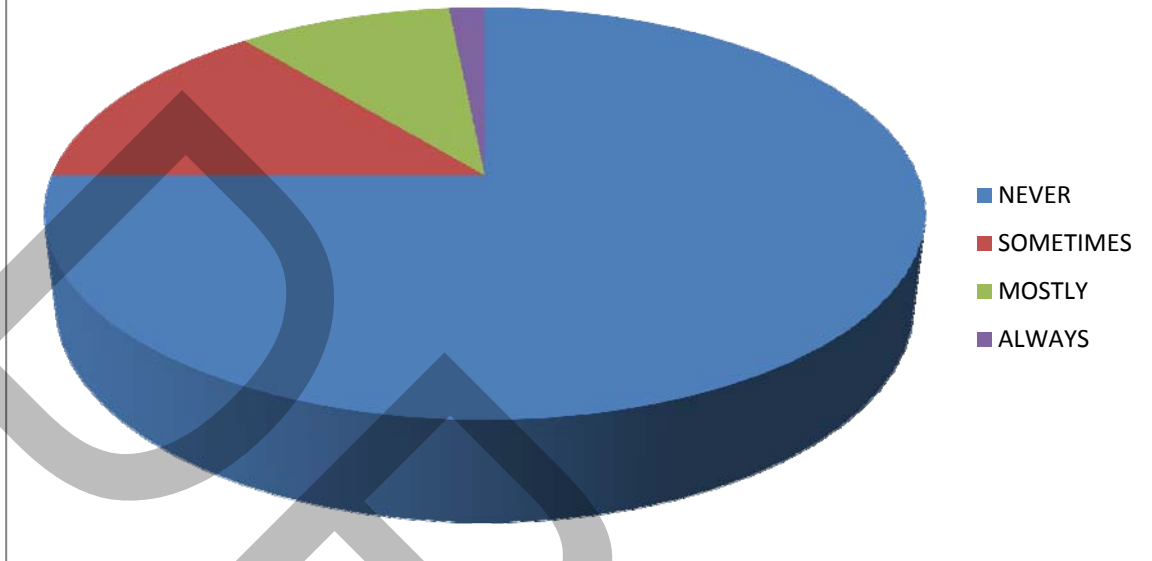
Where do You do Most of Your Food Shopping?



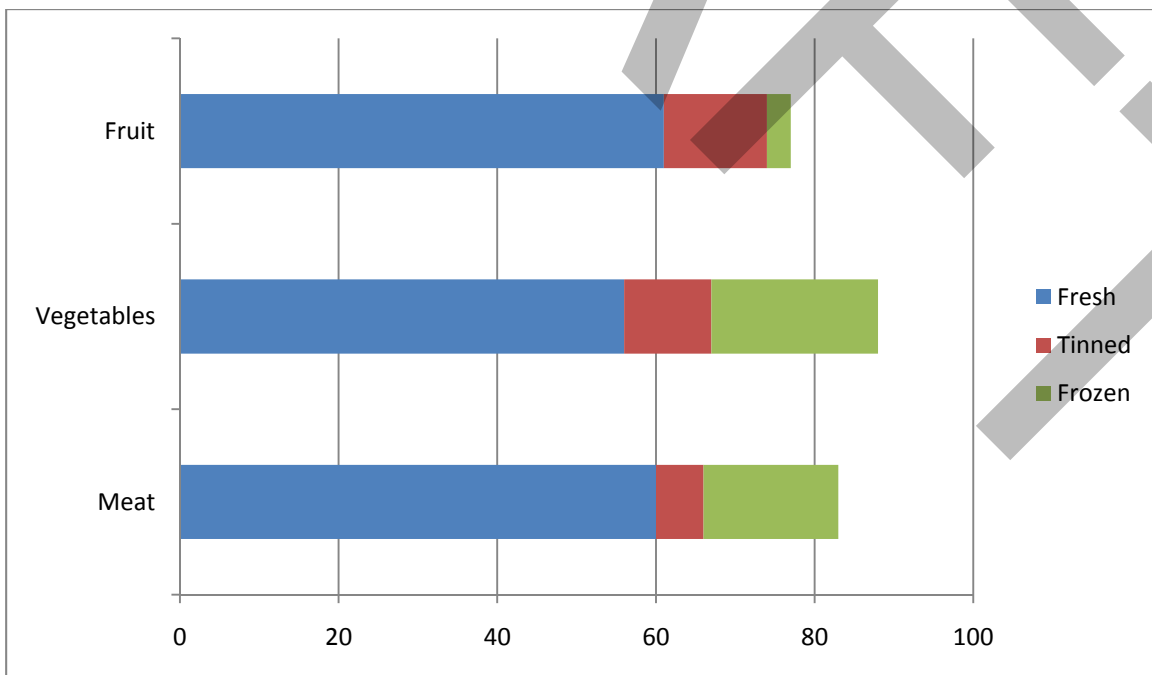
How Often do You go Food Shopping?



Do You Buy Food Shopping Online?

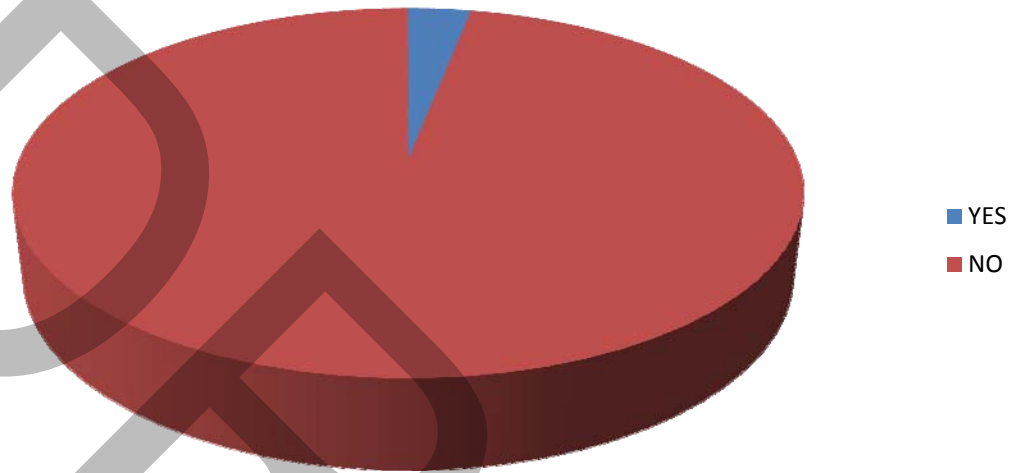


Question 7 When you buy the following what do you choose?

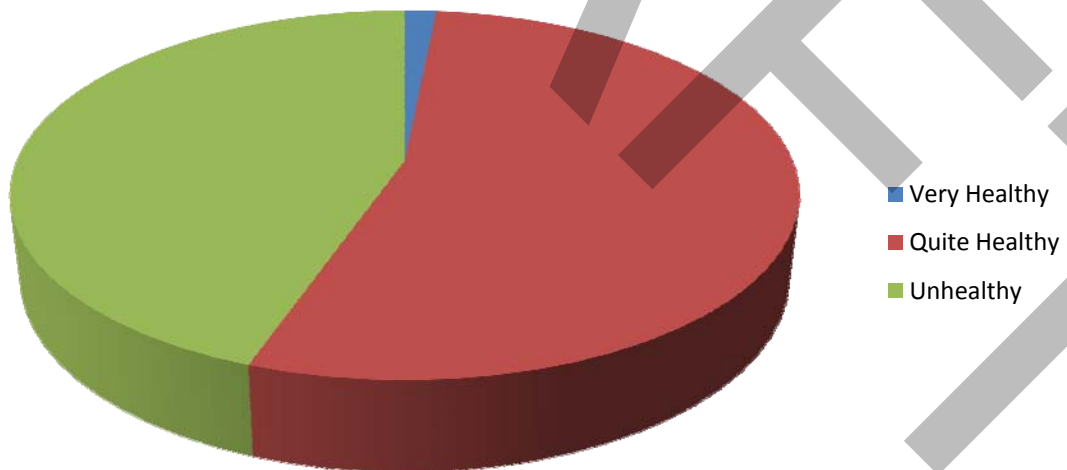


Question 9 Do you get a say in what your local shop stocks?

Do You Get A Say in what your local shop stocks?



Do you think your local shop provides healthy options?



Appendix 2.

A selection of input choices for non-numerical or mixed answers:

Question 5 If you DON'T shop locally, what is the main reason? Non- prompted responses.

1. very poor quality with very little choice	Tue, Jan 4, 2011 12:45 PM
2. Dirty shop and unhelpful staff	Thu, Dec 30, 2010 6:06 AM
3. Its crap!	Thu, Dec 30, 2010 3:04 AM
4. Require co-op to stock according to local needs	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:58 PM
5. The Local Co-op Is very badly run	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:00 PM
6. Unreliable stock control	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:58 AM
7. Range is crap	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 5:54 AM
8. The range of goods is too small	Fri, Nov 26, 2010 7:37 AM

Question 5 Prompted responses:

Not enough of the things I need 32/40 (80%)

Freshness of Produce is a problem 30/40 (77%)

It is too expensive 18/40 (45%)

Question 8 What don't you like about shopping locally? Non-Prompted responses.

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|
| 1. | The availability and the cost. | Thu, Jan 6, 2011 12:45 PM |
| 2. | Poor choice, fruit & veg is poor quality and variety is non existent | Tue, Jan 4, 2011 12:45 PM |
| 3. | There is never enough if you are not in coop by 10 o clock there is very little or nothing left. unless you want pet food or alcohol. | Tue, Jan 4, 2011 4:40 AM |
| 4. | Well where do I start, the quality and choice of fruit and veg very poor, some days you can't even get the basics such as turnip etc. | Mon, Jan 3, 2011 4:15 PM |
| 5. | there is very little choice, and when it finally arrives ion our shelves it only has one day left until best before date runs out, very cheap products at a very costly price, also very difficult to feed a family, our store caters for convenience foods, and pre packed meals for 1, not suitable for feeding a family of 5 or 6 | Mon, Jan 3, 2011 2:13 PM |
| 6. | You don't always get fresh food that has much of a use by date. Poor range and sometimes just lack of food to buy. | Mon, Jan 3, 2011 9:11 AM |
| 7. | The store is never full of food you need.
You can hardly get what you need e.g.; Christmas Time- Had to go to Daliburgh Co-op to get my shopping for Christmas day. | Fri, Dec 31, 2010 11:35 AM |
| 8. | Lack of choice, particularly in the Co-op when you see products elsewhere (Stornoway etc.) that aren't available in stores in Uist | Fri, Dec 31, 2010 5:29 AM |
| 9. | Where do you start, firstly it's never well dated, hardly ever fresh when it arrives and there's never a big enough choice of fresh veg, fruit meat etc. | Thu, Dec 30, 2010 8:08 AM |

10.	No choice	Thu, Dec 30, 2010 6:06 AM
11.	Its smelly.	Thu, Dec 30, 2010 3:04 AM
12.	Main issue is lack of/erratic availability of some staple items (bread, milk, fruit, veg, and meat). When they are available, the "use by" date is often too short.	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 3:08 PM
13.	not enough variety	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 1:56 PM
14.	if you have a query and ask to speak to the manageress SHE IS NEVER AVAILABLE. There is also a very limited selection of food available a lot of empty shelves but plenty alcohol and sweets	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 1:15 PM
15.	no organic section	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 11:45 AM
16.	Lack of variety eg cheese and cold meats which are not pre-packed	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 10:59 AM
17.	some fresh foods (esp. fresh fruit) can be pricey but very poor quality, sometimes there no option but to buy it anyway because that is all there is	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 10:49 AM
18.	The retailers have NO idea about supply and demand.	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 9:53 AM
19.	Never a big variety of fresh fruit veg ...or never anything different	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 8:31 AM
20.	The so called fresh meat, vegetables and fruit are never fresh, always around sell by date prior to arriving on island. When asked why the co-op didn't stock certain healthy foods, the answer from the management was "It's not on our floor plan"!!	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 8:25 AM
21.	The so called fresh meat, vegetables and fruit are never fresh, always around sell by date prior to arriving on island	Wed, Dec 29, 2010

	When asked why the co-op didn't stock certain healthy foods, the answer from the management was "It's not on our floor plan"!!	8:25 AM
22.	too far away from Eoligarry does not have enough selection of food	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 8:04 AM
23.	Can't get fresh food in coop, sometimes you can't even get frozen or tinned food in coop. Can't get a lot of things in the coop. A&C MacLean (butchers) is too small but they are very good at getting things you need in for you.	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 7:38 AM
24.	Feast or Famine syndrome. If your timing is precisely right OK, otherwise rapidly diminishing choice.	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 7:10 AM
25.	Barra Coop- This is the main food shop. Have to shop as soon as bread & milk comes in or none left. Fresh produce often on or very close to use by date. Fruit often already over ripe or beginning to rot. Only small sizes of soap powder stocked due to height of shelving. Food shopping online unavailable, won't deliver to Barra.	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 4:28 AM
26.	The Lack of Fresh Produce and the very small selection available	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 2:17 AM
27.	price	Wed, Dec 29, 2010 1:29 AM
28.	Co-op is a "convenience store" with no thought taken for the island requirements with many popular products discontinued resulting in many trips to Uist and Oban.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:58 PM
29.	not fresh	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 3:00 PM
30.	extortionate pricing especially coop	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 2:53 PM
31.	Poor quality of fruit & veg	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 2:34 PM
32.	Lack of produce they keep saying today's not a shopping	Tue, Dec

	day????????? what kind of explanation is that	28, 2010 2:08 PM
33.	Can't get fresh fruit and vegetables all the time.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 1:55 PM
34.	Fruit and vegetables are not as fresh as you would get on the mainland. There is a distinct lack of supply every other day. At times you have no choice but to buy fruit and vegetables that is already past its shelf life. People choose to buy healthily and lead a healthy life style. The Barra Co-op dedicates a whole aisle to sweets, chocolate, crisps and another aisle to beer, spirits and wine. Surely more space should be allocated to a wider variety of foods for customers or essential household items that other Co-ops provide?	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 1:51 PM
35.	Never have what you want unless you want booze and junk food	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 1:47 PM
36.	It is often difficult to get fresh meat and veg. It is always difficult to get fresh bread (it is always a few days old on arrival).	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 1:27 PM
37.	all goods arrive too late as most of our goods come in on the ferry this ferry should leave earlier on Monday Wednesday Friday mornings	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:58 PM
38.	The price. The lack of choice. The lack of well timed public transport.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:51 PM
39.	No decent selection of foods - Lots of pre-made rubbish. No variety of fruit or veg - Fruit and veg is NOT fresh. Expensive. Not unusual to see rotting fruit. Requests to the manager for food or drinks (juice) are ignored or you're told that they won't get them as they aren't on the 'plan'. Too much space used up with alcohol.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:39 PM
40.	The Barra coop it only gives it (fresh fruit, veg. Etc.) in two days there is not enough food the food can be out of date	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:39 PM
41.	I'm vegetarian and find it hard to get something 'different'. e.g. In frozen section, if vegetarian you can get either Linda McCartney Sausages, Quorn Mince, Quorn Pieces or Cheese Pizza. In the fresh section, there is a very small selection of vegetables. Half the vegetables available here are organic and a lot of the time there	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:15 PM

are rotten anyway.
As for the fruit, it's also limited and not fresh, in fact the bananas and oranges were black and mouldy today.
On the odd occasion when there is fresh stuff in, it's very expensive.

42.	Lack of choice, poor quality, appalling customer service	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:15 PM
43.	Lack of fresh local produce. Lack of choice in co-op.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:03 PM
44.	The Incompetence of the management at the local Co-op	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 12:00 PM
45.	Lack of variety in local store. Often lack of food - can shop at 11am on the day of fresh delivery and no bread, fresh fruit, meats or veg. Fresh produce has very short shelf life (often food has one or two day life after delivery to store?). Cost of produce is also an issue.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:58 AM
46.	Lack of fresh products available, unless you are at the shop early in the day. Some of us have to work and are not able to do this.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:57 AM
47.	Can only buy some things on certain days.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:54 AM
48.	not much variety	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 11:49 AM
49.	price and variety	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 9:32 AM
50.	Poor choice - not enough high quality products available	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 9:17 AM
51.	Limited availability and variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, often they are already starting to deteriorate in quality before they appear on the shelves. I appreciate that, as the coop is a small store, it cannot provide a huge variety of fresh food but often the range that should be available is out of stock or being sold while very close to its "use by" date.	Tue, Dec 28, 2010 9:11 AM

52. Store is often dirty with very little choice.

Tue, Dec
28, 2010
5:54 AM

53. Lack of choice freshness and cost.

Tue, Dec
28, 2010
5:51 AM

54. It is too expensive and the choice is poor

Fri, Dec
17, 2010
10:00
AM

55. lack of choice and cost of food

Mon,
Dec 6,
2010
8:31 AM

56.

There is very little choice and what is available is very close to its sell by date.

Fri, Nov
26, 2010
7:37 AM

HEALTHY EATING IN BARRA QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:

TO THE RESIDENT

We would like you to answer some questions for us. Filling out this form will help us to check how available healthy fresh food is on the Isle of Barra. This information is totally anonymous. You do **NOT** need to write your name

DETAILS

- 1) Do you try to eat healthy?: Yes No
- 2) Do you try to shop locally? Yes No

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT THE FOOD YOU BUY

3) Where do you do **MOST** of your food shopping? (Please tick the **one** you use most)

- a) Co-op Barra. b) Co-op Daliburgh
- c) Maclennan's d) Stornoway
- e) Tesco Oban f) Other

4) How often do you go shopping?

- a) Monthly b) Weekly c) Most days d) Every Day

5) If you usually don't shop mostly on Barra, what is the main reason? (Please tick all that apply)

- a) Not enough of the things I need
- b) Freshness of produce is a problem
- c) It is too expensive
- d) Other

6) Do you buy food shopping online?

- a) Rarely/never b) Sometimes c) Mostly d) Always

7) When you buy the following, what do you choose?

	Fresh	Frozen	Tinned
a) Meat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) What DON'T you like about your local shopping experience?

THESE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

FRUIT

When we talk about a **portion of fruit** it means a whole apple, orange, banana or a **whole** cup full of dried or chopped fruit eg raisins

VEGETABLES

When we talk about a **portion of vegetables** it means **half** a cup of vegetables

9) How many portions of fruit did you eat yesterday?

Please circle one answer 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

10) How many portions of vegetables did you eat yesterday?

Please circle one answer 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR VIEWS ON SOME HEALTHY EATING ISSUES

11) Do you get a say about the types of food that are available in your LOCAL shop?

(For example the choice of fresh food available or the types of vegetables sold?)

a) YES b) NO

12) Do you think your LOCAL shop provides healthy food and drink choices for customers?

a) VERY HEALTHY b) PRETTY HEALTHY c) NOT HEALTHY

Please return in the envelope provided it does not need a stamp.

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE