

Propel info

Operators urged to be more transparent when defining local produce on their menus:

Operators have been urged to be more transparent when it comes to defining local produce on their menus following a new survey. The findings by guest experience management experts HospitalityGEM (soon to be rebranded as HGEM) showed almost three-quarters (72%) of diners cited local ingredients as the most important factor when choosing where to dine out. That figure rose to 81% when diners from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were asked if the use of local ingredients would make them more likely to visit a restaurant. Furthermore, the reason for choosing a dish with locally sourced ingredients was cited as “to support the local economy” by more than half (57%) of diners. The survey identified, however, that diners were looking for operators to be more transparent when words such as “provenance”, “local” and “artisan” were used on their menus. HospitalityGEM managing director Steven Pike has offered five tips to help operators. These are – highlighting how local “local” is and shouting about their offering using chalkboards and point-of-sale notices combined with online content to help explain terminology and improve diners’ understanding of what “local” really means. He also said operators should emphasise the quality of local produce to justify an increased spend because many diners may associate lower distribution costs with food on their doorstep. Operators should also “start the story online”, after 74% of respondents said they used social media to influence a purchasing decision, which extended to where they eat and drink as well. Pike said operators should ensure staff were “in the know”, with diners looking for genuine claims when opting for local produce. He added: “The data we’ve collected illustrates the psyche of diners in relation to local produce and what influences their decision when choosing where to eat. There are many ‘buzzwords’ for diners when reading your menu, with various recent pieces of research highlighting the importance. However, don’t be too haphazard in the use of these terms, or diners may begin to question the transparency of your business and the true value of what’s on their plate.”