

Case study on local supply chains: Venison in nursery meals

Little Tums is a children's nursery and school catering company based in Shoreham. They provide fresh, healthy, hot lunches, hot and cold teas and baby weaning meals to settings in Sussex, Surrey, Kent and London.

As part of their work to improve health and sustainability in public sector food buying, Brighton and Hove Food Partnership introduced Little Tums to Chefs Farms. This local wholesaler source fresh produce with full traceability, often buying seasonal produce from farms in and around Sussex. As a result, Chefs Farms are now providing Little Tums with around 100kg of [sustainably managed venison](#) per month.

The venison comes from a group of 15 or more trained deer stalkers who operate between Midhurst and Steyning.



Responsible culling helps control overpopulated deer herds, which in turn protects young forests, supports biodiversity, and allows ecosystems to regenerate naturally. This practice reduces the need for intensive farming, lowering the carbon footprint associated with meat production. Venison itself is lean, high in protein, and rich in essential nutrients such as iron, zinc, and B vitamins, making it a healthy alternative to many commercially farmed meats.

Little Tums decided to trail venison on one main meal and one hot tea every 3 weeks, feeding 1,850 children, on average (taking into account dietary needs). The dishes currently on the menu are Venison Bourguignon (lunch) and Venison Pie (hot tea).

Charlie from Little Tums said:

"Despite my initial reservations on venison being child friendly and how parents would perceive it, I have been very surprised and couldn't have been more wrong. I have had only one email of concern and once I emailed our flyer on venison (above) being the star of the show they were satisfied".

As well as swapping less sustainable meat for venison, at least one meal per week is vegetarian and the majority of Little Tum's vegetarian meals contain beans and pulses - a high-quality plant protein for building muscles and tissues, aiding digestion, supporting brain development, strong bones, and a healthy immune system. Their mild flavour and soft texture—especially when cooked well—make them easy to incorporate into meals for even the pickiest eaters.

Little Tums' Summer menu - which launches in May – will source more local, seasonal, fresh ingredients from Chefs Farms. The caterer aims to source as many of their ingredients as possible from a 50-mile radius and are open trying new dishes on the menu. However, a big factor is the staff in the settings they provide food to. As Charlie points out:

"The staff have to be on board with the concepts and of course, as paying customers, they need to see meals being eaten and enjoyed in order to be willing to continue a happy business relationship".