



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Government Food Strategy

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We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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# Foreword

Farmers and food producers are the lifeblood of our nation. Recent events, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, are a reminder of the importance of our food industry and domestic food production. These give us national resilience. That is why we are putting food security at the heart of this Food Strategy.

Here in the UK, we have a high degree of food security. The first UK Food Security Report, published last year, provided an analysis of our self-sufficiency, security and resilience. We are largely self-sufficient in wheat production, growing 88% of all the wheat that we need here. We are 86% self-sufficient in beef, fully self-sufficient in liquid milk and produce more lamb than we consume. We are close to 100% self-sufficient in poultry, carrots and swedes. Sectors like soft fruit have seen a trend towards greater self-sufficiency in recent years with an extended UK season displacing imports.

Our production to supply ratio remains high judged against historical levels. It was running at just 30% in the late 19th century and little more than 40% before the Second World War. If you look at the foods we can produce, then our production to supply ratio today remains healthy at 74% and has been stable since the turn of the century.

The food industry itself is bigger than the automotive and aerospace industries combined – and more evenly dispersed across the country. Food manufacturers provide employment opportunities in areas where there might otherwise be deprivation. They offer apprenticeships and opportunities for the next generation; they invest in research and development, and they give local areas a sense of pride and identity. None of our food manufacturers could succeed without the farmers and fishers who supply them with high quality produce.

Our Food Strategy sets out a plan to transform our food system to ensure it is fit for the future. We want to see a sustainable food system, from farm to fork and catch to plate, seizing on the opportunities before us, levelling-up every part of the country and ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and healthier food. It takes on several of Henry Dimbleby's recommendations and builds on the work that is already underway through our Agriculture Act (2020), Agricultural Transition Plan, Fisheries Act (2020), Environment Act (2021), and Levelling-Up White Paper.

Our manifesto was clear that we want people, at home and abroad, to be lining up to buy British. This strategy will support that commitment; I want to see more locally sourced food, I want our food producers to be able to take advantage of trade deals we are striking around the world, and I want consumers to be confident in the British food that they are buying in their local supermarket.

We are living through a period of change, but we can face the future with confidence.

# Executive summary

- i. The food and drink industry has an important role to play in the Government's levelling up agenda. It is the UK's largest manufacturing industry, bigger than the aerospace and automotive industries combined. UK agri-food and seafood sectors create over £120 billion of value for the economy every year and employ over 4 million people. Working with government, they underpin our food security: demonstrating great resilience when dealing with disruption at national and international levels, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and most recently through the conflict in Ukraine.
- ii. The agri-food sector is in every region of the nation, creating wealth and employment. Whether it's Scotch Whisky, the Cumberland Sausage, Fenland Celery, Worcestershire Sauce, the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie, Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb, Conwy Mussels, countless cheeses, or Cornish Clotted Cream, every part of Britain has its local specialities and recipes which contribute to local identity and pride in place. Throughout history, the food and drink industry has invested in people and communities up and down the country.
- iii. In 2018, the UK Government asked Henry Dimbleby, the co-founder of restaurant chain Leon, to carry out a comprehensive review of the food system – 'the independent review' – with a scope focused on England but making consideration of our relationship with the Devolved Administrations (DAs), the European Union (EU) and other trading partners. The review was a powerful analysis of the challenges facing the food system, centred on two diagnoses – described as the 'Junk Food Cycle' and the 'Invisibility of Nature' – and it made a number of important recommendations.
- iv. This Government Food Strategy responds to the findings and recommendations of the independent review; we accept much of the analysis and do not repeat it here. We also accept the majority of recommendations, with policy initiatives to boost health, sustainability, accessibility of diets and to secure food supply, ensuring that domestic producers and the wider food and drink industry contributes to the levelling up agenda and makes the most of post-Brexit opportunities.
- v. The Strategy comes at a time of significant increases in food prices, largely as a result of energy prices and exacerbated by events in Ukraine, which is very challenging for people across the country. We are engaging closely with the food industry to understand price impacts and any mitigating measures, including through our Food Industry Resilience Forum and UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group. We are also working closely with third sector organisations to understand challenges related to food access.
- vi. Food prices are a central element within the Government's wider cost of living programme. We know the cost of food has real consequences for people across the country; the broader affordability of food, and individuals' access to food, is a key element of the Government's strategy to address poverty in the round as we learn to live with recent events and manage the impact of cost-of-living pressures. The Chancellor announced a £15bn cost of living support package on 26 May 2022, including taking £400 off household energy bills and providing a one-off £650 payment to the most vulnerable

households, bringing the total support package to £37bn along with measures such as the reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate, raising the threshold for National Insurance, cutting fuel duty, and creating a Household Support Fund. The Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes, helping them to enter and progress in work and lead fulfilled lives.

vii. This Food Strategy focuses on longer-term measures to support a resilient, healthier, and more sustainable food system that is accessible to all, rather than duplicating work on the cost of living. However, it is complementary to this work, setting out measures which will ease supply chain bottlenecks and improve efficiency, therefore reducing pressures on the cost of food; it includes measures to support good quality jobs around the country; and it also sets out how we will continue to support children and families on low incomes to learn and eat healthily through various initiatives such as healthy start, free school meals, breakfast clubs and the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). We will consider the impacts of policies resulting from this strategy on food prices and will focus on ensuring that impacts are manageable as we unlock the benefits of healthier and more sustainable diets.

viii. Our objectives for this strategy are to deliver:

1. A prosperous agri-food and seafood sector that ensures a secure food supply in an unpredictable world and contributes to the levelling up agenda through good quality jobs around the country.
2. A low-carbon, nature-positive food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and sustainable diets for all.
3. Trade that provides export opportunities and consumer choice through imports, without compromising our standards for animal welfare or doing environmental or social harm.

ix. The strategy sets out how we will deliver these objectives, supported by the following goals:

- Broadly maintaining the current level of food we produce domestically, and sustainably boosting production in sectors where there are post-Brexit opportunities including horticulture and seafood.
- Ensuring that by 2030, pay, employment and productivity, as well as completion of high-quality skills training will have risen in every area of the UK, to support our production and levelling up objectives.
- Halving childhood obesity by 2030, reducing the Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) gap between local areas where it is highest and lowest by 2030, adding five years to HLE by 2035 and reducing the proportion of the population living with diet-related illnesses; and to support this, increasing the proportion of healthier food sold.
- Reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and the environmental impacts of the food system, in line with our Net Zero commitments and biodiversity targets and preparing for the risks from a changing climate.

- Contributing to our Export Strategy goal to reach £1 trillion of exports by 2030 and supporting more UK food and drink businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), to take advantage of new market access and free trade agreements (FTAs) post-Brexit.
- Maintaining high standards for food consumed in the UK, wherever it is produced.

x. We will publish a report to monitor progress against these goals alongside the next UK Food Security Report and will continue to do so regularly at a frequency that allows trends to emerge, and dovetails with other relevant publications. This will draw on independent analysis from the Climate Change Committee (CCC), Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Office for Environment Protection (OEP).

xi. As with the independent review, the scope of this strategy is for England, reflecting the fact that food policy is devolved. The themes broadly overlap but we have gone further in places, for example, on levelling up and labour.

xii. Defra is responsible for food policy; however, the policy levers that influence the food system are dispersed across Government. To implement this strategy, we will:

- join-up within Government to collectively drive progress;
- work closely with the DAs, reflecting that the food system operates on a UK-wide basis; and
- champion a collaborative approach by working in partnership with industry and civil society.

xiii. Our assessment is that we have existing powers in primary legislation to implement the measures in this strategy. However, we will seek primary or secondary legislation as required to achieve our objectives. Before doing so, we will consult fully on all policy changes in the usual way.

## 1. Food security and sustainable production

### 1.1. Ensuring security and sustainability of food supply in an unpredictable world

1.1.1 In December 2021, the Government published the UK Food Security Report, the first comprehensive review of the UK's food security to be published since the UK Food Security Assessment (UKFSA) in 2009. The report found that we have a high degree of food security in the UK. Domestically we produce 60% by value of all the food we need, rising to 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK. We produce more lamb and liquid milk than we consume and, in recent years, our production in sectors like poultry and soft fruit has increased. This strong domestic production, balanced with international trade, contributes to a diverse and resilient UK food supply.

1.1.2. Self-sufficiency is not the same as food security. Being part of a global food system provides us with a diversity of supply sources and access to new products that cannot be produced domestically, contributing to our food security. However, increased exposure to international markets in combination with global supply chain pressures and shocks can also create price and supply impacts such as those arising from the conflict in Ukraine. Over the last two years, our primary producers and the wider food and drink sector have shown remarkable resilience, working in partnership with government to maintain food supply despite global disruption and huge challenges to all elements of the supply chain during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1.3. To build the UK's resilience to future crises and shocks, we continue to strengthen the resilience of our supply chains and support our domestic production. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Government has set out measures to help farmers and food producers manage increased input costs, including a package on fertilisers. Going forward, we will engage with industry to understand and address barriers to uptake of risk management or other farming insurance products. This will reduce volatility and help to maintain confidence levels among farmers. We have also helped businesses to manage vegetable oil substitution and access to more diverse supply chains where there are shortages of ingredients. We will work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs such as CO<sub>2</sub> and fertiliser. This will include a specific long-term plan on CO<sub>2</sub> in 2022 and a focus on pioneering more organic-based fertilisers, to ensure continued certainty and availability for all inputs which underpin our food production.

1.1.4. As well as strengthening the resilience of domestic supply chains, we will continue to work with international partners to support worldwide action to mitigate the impacts of food crises on the most vulnerable countries and people. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has escalated the global food security crisis, by pushing up wheat, maize and fertiliser prices. We produce 88% of the wheat that we need domestically, with the rest coming predominantly from Canada. However, we are working with like-minded countries around the world to ensure that we keep trade flowing and keep food prices down. And we are providing significant support to mitigate the impact of food prices on the countries and people most at risk through multilateral organisations. We are also working to increase global food security in the long term through increasing the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and other areas of the food system.

## **1.2. Driving more sustainable food production**

1.2.1. The conflict in Ukraine has shown us that domestic food production matters and gives us national resilience. It is essential to food security and ensures we do not offshore the production of food to countries that do not meet our high standards. It will also play a critical role in delivering towards the Government's Carbon Budgets and environmental targets, delivered through farmers and land managers. Through the Net Zero Strategy, we are committed to reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. Furthermore, Brexit has provided a once in a generation opportunity to reform our farming policies so that we focus support on sustainable food production. Our Agriculture



and Fisheries Acts do this by providing frameworks for the sustainable production of food, where within England we are maintaining funding available for farmers across this parliament but reforming it away from unfair and ineffective Direct Payments, to targeted offers to support farmers in building more resilient and sustainable food producing businesses. One of our key vehicles for this is the Sustainable Farming Incentive which will incentivise farmers to improve soil quality, invest in hedgerows, encourage optimal use of fertiliser and pesticides, and support regenerative practices such as agroforestry. Other schemes are designed to support farmers to reduce input costs, boost yields and increase profitability, and together will support our ambitious environment targets including: to halt species decline in England by 2030; treble woodland creation rates by the end of this Parliament; restore 280,000 hectares of peatland in England by 2050; protect 30% of our land and sea by 2030; improve soil health, and reduce climate emissions.

1.2.2. The independent review refers to a “three compartment model” for land use change, reflecting the need for a combination of intensification, land sharing and land sparing to deliver government objectives and feed a growing population. There are 9.2 million hectares of farmland in England but there is no direct correlation between the UK land area farmed and agricultural output. We have some of the best performing farms in the world, with 57% of agricultural output coming from just 33% of the farmed land area. It follows from this that it is possible to target land-use change at the least productive land, to increase the environmental benefit from farming and to increase yields with minimal impact on food production.

1.2.3. Therefore, we do not need to reduce domestic food production to meet our wider environmental objectives. **We will aim to broadly maintain the production to supply ratio of foods we can produce at the current level** as we consider how land use change can support our environmental goals. To further support this, rather than a fixed and inflexible allocation of funding across environmental land management offers, we will respond to farmer demand for our schemes whilst ensuring we are on track to deliver our policies on food production, animal health and welfare, the natural environmental and net-zero, with the majority of funding for land use change to be provided through the separate and additional Nature for Climate Fund. Together with imports from a diverse range of countries, and increased output in sectors with growth opportunities, including horticulture and seafood, sustainable domestic production will ensure continued security of food supply. In 2023, we will **publish a land use framework** that, amongst other things, will reflect this assumption on domestic food production and the work of the House of Lords special inquiry committee into land use in England. It will also inform incentives we build into our agri-environment schemes.

1.2.4. To ensure the farming that underpins our resilient food production is sustainable, and maintains output, we plan to spend over £270 million across our farming innovation programmes to 2029 and have bolstered funding for farmers to invest in new equipment where there is scope to boost their productivity. This will also help farmers to identify and develop low carbon farming practices and carbon storage opportunities. Farmers and growers should be at the heart of innovation, with research driven by demand to boost production and profitability and reduce environmental harms. The Agriculture and

Horticulture Board (AHDB) will play an important role in developing a what works centre to share best practice across the industry, which was recommended by Henry Dimbleby to improve the quality of advice on the practical implications for agriculture of goals such as net zero. This will be complemented by the new Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH), due to launch this summer, which will help farmers and growers to access the right skills to run professional, sustainable, and profitable businesses.

1.2.5. Another part of supporting a thriving farming sector is to ensure that the animals and crops we keep and grow are healthy and well-cared for, which also benefits the health and welfare of our own population. Our Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will involve government funded vet visits and advice to farmers about measures to improve the health and welfare of their animals, with one of its objectives being to control endemic disease in farmed animals. We have already reduced consumption of antibiotics in animals by over 50% since 2014; the Pathway will continue this progressive reduction in use of antibiotics.

1.2.6. As the custodians of our natural environment and important contributors to our food security, farmers must be treated fairly. We have introduced powers to regulate commercial relationships between producers and processors and to prevent unfair trading practices; and consulted on contractual practice in the UK dairy sector. Subsequent regulations will build sustainable commercial relationships across the dairy supply chain that reflect an equitable share of risk between producers and processors. We will shortly consult on the need for similar action in other sectors and have already begun engagement with the pig sector to identify key issues in the pork supply chain.

1.2.7. To support continued high-quality British food and drink production, we are committed to helping consumers better understand where the food they buy comes from and its production impacts. The Food Data Transparency Partnership outlined in section 2.3 will support this, along with improved procurement practice to encourage the use of locally produced food. We will continue to monitor the food supply to demand ratio through the UK Food Security Report which will be published at least once every three years. Furthermore, our new trade policy will harness opportunities to import and export food and drink in a way that does not reduce overall domestic production, whilst allowing us to unlock the benefits and opportunities of a global food system.

### **1.3. Levelling up the food system by maximising growth opportunities**

1.3.1. The UK agri-food and seafood sectors employ over 4 million people, making an important contribution to the Government's vision to level up the UK. Government will work with these sectors to spread economic growth across the country in line with our levelling up missions on pay and productivity. We will do this by supporting new industries and boosting production in sectors where there are growth opportunities. Brexit also provides opportunities for these sectors which we outline in a later section.

1.3.2. Commercial horticulture uses a new generation of sustainable and efficient greenhouses and provides opportunities to reduce our reliance on overseas production:

boosting home-grown fruit and vegetable production, future-proofing the sector in a warming climate, and creating new job opportunities across the country. The UK currently produces only 23% of the cucumbers and 15% of the tomatoes supplied domestically. But with the right tools, vibrant, growing sectors like these can expand significantly. To create a positive investment environment for the sector, we will **include industrial horticulture<sup>1</sup> alongside other manufacturing sectors in decisions on industrial energy policy and review the planning permission process to support new developments. We will also incentivise the sector to make use of surplus heat and CO2 from industrial processes, and renewable sources of energy.** Our skilled worker visa route will allow skilled professionals from overseas to bring their expertise to the UK in developing this sector.

1.3.3. The Government has already announced the expansion of the Seasonal Worker Visa Route to 2024. Taking advantage of this, we will work with growers to develop a world leading **Horticulture Strategy for England**. This will examine the diverse roles of small, large, and emerging growing models, and drive high tech, controlled environment horticulture to increase domestic production. We see an increasing role for automation in horticulture and across the agri-food chain and will support this through our Farming Innovation Programme. We will lead and publish the government response to the automation in horticulture review that was co-chaired by Professor Simon Pearson.

1.3.4. The alternative protein sector provides another opportunity for growth, complementing traditional livestock sectors. The UK has been at the forefront of innovation in protein sources since the development of Quorn products in the 1980s. The Government will keep the UK at the front of this growing and innovative sector by supporting alternative protein research and innovation, including as part of our partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to invest over £130 million in research across the food system. British grown beans and pulses are another great example of low carbon sustainable proteins that provide healthy diets, contribute substantially to farming objectives; and are recognised as valuable break crops in arable cropping.

1.3.5. Sustainable sources of protein do not have to be new or novel or displace traditional sectors. Regenerative farming will also provide a more sustainable production of traditional protein sources. Using livestock to benefit the environment in balance with food production is already being championed by many small-scale farmers. Our Farming Futures research and development (R&D) Fund (part of our farming innovation programme) will help the livestock and protein sectors embrace 'climate-smart farming' and innovative technologies. To support this, **we will launch a Call for Evidence to better understand the challenges associated with the use of feed additives and materials that can reduce methane emissions from livestock.** This will explore how we can work with farmers and

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<sup>1</sup> Encompassing highly productive, high tech, controlled environment growing operations which include multi-acre glasshouses and vertical farms.

agri-businesses to increase adoption of this technology to support more sustainable protein production. There are also proteins from non-traditional livestock sectors. For example, in support of the management of wild deer populations **we will look to increase the use of responsibly sourced wild venison**, which would have otherwise been disposed of, in the food chain.

1.3.6. Seafood is another potentially lower-carbon and healthy source of protein which can grow to fulfil its potential within the food sector. We are investing £24 million to support seafood science and innovation as part of the £100 million UK Seafood Fund. This will include funding projects that develop innovation and technology in the seafood space. Innovations in aquaculture will also help us boost production in the seafood sector without adding to pressure on fish stocks. The Fund also includes at least £65 million for an infrastructure scheme, investing in ports, and aquaculture and processing facilities for the seafood industry, to help support coastal communities.

## 1.4. Levelling up the food system through skills and innovation

1.4.1. Government will unlock the potential of the food and drink sector by boosting completion of high-quality skills training and driving investment and innovation throughout the supply chain. Food manufacturing is our biggest manufacturing sector with a business in every part of the UK, providing employment opportunities and driving regional economic growth in areas where there might otherwise be deprivation. As part of our levelling up missions on employment and skills, government will continue to work with the food manufacturing sector as well as other parts of the food chain to spread opportunities across the country and move towards a high wage, high skill economy.

1.4.2. Agri-food businesses currently face a range of workforce challenges despite the variety of roles and career pathways available. The Government has already reformed our approach to skills and worked closely with industry to launch several schemes to provide high quality training and encourage new entrants into the workforce, including the reintroduction of T-levels. We will now work with industry to ensure that our offer is clear and coherent, to identify gaps and understand barriers to uptake, particularly amongst small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). We will increase the focus on skills with respect to the food sector, including boosting their representation on expert skills groups and helping them articulate where there are gaps in existing provision and new skills requirements. This will drive improvements in pay and productivity in all regions of the UK as well as boosting completion of high-quality skills training in line with our levelling up missions.

1.4.3. Despite these initiatives and the great strides industry is making to adapt to the new points-based immigration system, we saw in 2021 how this essential supply chain continues to be heavily reliant on seasonal migrant labour. Noting the particular shortage of seasonal workers in the turkey processing industry, **we will extend the Seasonal Worker visa route to include poultry**, building on the success of our approach in 2021.

This is in addition to several poultry, and wider agri-food roles already being eligible under the Skilled Worker route since December 2020. We will work with industry to articulate key food industry shortages to inform the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) upcoming review of the Shortage Occupation List. Recognising that the sector cannot sustainably rely on migrant labour, especially in light of global pressures elsewhere, the Government will also in the coming weeks **commission an independent review to tackle labour shortages in the food supply chain. This will consider the roles of automation, domestic labour, and migration in the labour market, the last of these with reference to the wider work by the MAC**, to ensure UK businesses can access the labour they require.

1.4.4. In late 2021, we introduced various temporary visa schemes to address acute shortages of pig butchers, poultry workers and HGV drivers. Work coordinated by the Cabinet Office and led by Sir Dave Lewis last year on supply chains across the whole economy recognised that the food and drink industry has shown remarkable resilience. However, it concluded that there are particular vulnerabilities, including an overreliance on transporting food by trucks. We will work with industry to increase use of other transport options where possible to reduce reliance on HGV drivers and improve food security.

1.4.5. We have set out above the funding for innovation in farming and agriculture. As well as looking at innovative ways to improve our supply chains, we want to promote innovative practices and technologies across the entire agri-food sector, working with industry on research and innovation in support of net zero across agriculture, soils and peat, waste, and land use. Partnering with research councils, universities and industry can unlock greater investment in innovation. We will work with UKRI, industry and consumer groups to develop joint priority areas for funding, including regional priorities, and proposals to access this, for example on industry automation and alternative proteins. We are also working with UKRI to maximise the reach of industry-led collaborative R&D to SMEs across the UK. This will drive development and uptake of innovation across the entire agri-food chain.

1.4.6. To ensure food manufacturers get a fair share of government support for innovation, we will work with industry to drive greater confidence, uptake and investment in new technologies. We will build on existing work with geographically diverse academic institutions and innovation providers to connect industry with innovation expertise, showcase companies leading the way in adoption of new technologies, and host R&D collaborations. This will allow companies to work together with researchers to solve common problems and ensure new technologies work for the sector.

1.4.7. We recognise that SMEs often require more tailored support to take up new innovations and growth opportunities. We will continue to offer specialised regional support and engagement with food and drink SMEs, building on the success of the Regional Food and Drink Summit earlier this year.

## 1.5. Reducing barriers and bureaucracy following Brexit

1.5.1. Following our departure from the EU, we will review our rules and regulations to ensure they are proportionate and based on the best available science, enabling quick and effective deployment of new technologies at the highest consumer standards. We will drive innovation in genetic technologies step-by-step. We have already acted by removing burdens from field trials and, through the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill, we will create a new simpler regulatory regime to allow researchers and breeders to unlock the benefits of technologies such as gene editing. We will also work with the FSA to develop dedicated guidance materials for approval of new alternative protein products while reviewing our novel food regulations. This will ensure they are transparent for innovators and investors, whilst maintaining world-leading consumer safety standards. Reforming EU regulations on wine will also allow us to support our businesses, whilst we will make things easier for consumers by reviewing regulations around low and no alcohol products.

1.5.2. Furthermore, we will remove any bureaucracy that stems from old EU rules and currently holds back our agri-food and fishing industries. We are working closely with farmers and growers to ensure regulation is outcome-focused, proportionate, and clear, whilst encouraging greater responsibility across the agri-food supply chain. Examples here include on-farm and remote interventions to deliver improved water quality and livestock traceability.

1.5.3. We are taking the opportunity to move away from the rigid EU framework of 'standard' check levels. Instead, border checks will be used only when necessary to protect our biosecurity. **We are reviewing legislation to enable a more flexible and dynamic approach to our border that is targeted according to risk.** We are also pursuing further digitisation at the border to reduce the burden on businesses and improve the flow of goods.

## 1.6. Reducing waste in the food system

1.6.1. Waste is harmful for the environment, bad for business, and damaging for society. The UK is an international leader on tackling food waste, and we are fully committed to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goal to halve global food waste by 2030. **We are therefore consulting on mandatory food waste reporting for businesses of a certain size.** To help consumers, we are continuing to work with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to help households waste less food. On top of this, the Environment Act introduces a requirement for all local authorities in England to arrange for the separate collection of food waste for recycling or composting. Our Net Zero Strategy announced £295 million of capital funding which will allow local authorities in England to prepare to implement free weekly separate food waste collections for all households from 2025. We will also tackle other forms of waste in the food system through Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging, which will hold food producers to account

for the packaging they produce. The Deposit Return Scheme will deter littering of in-scope containers and improve recycling, helping to restore pride in our local communities as we level up the country.

## 2. Healthier and sustainable eating

### 2.1. Trends in diet and obesity

2.1.1. The independent review highlighted the growing problem of obesity in the UK. Over the past four decades, the proportion of adults in England living with obesity has increased significantly. Latest data shows that around 64% of adults and 40% of children in England are overweight or living with obesity, which has been compounded by the pandemic.

2.1.2. The drivers of people eating more calories than their bodies need, causing excess weight gain, are numerous and complex. On average adults are consuming 200-300 more calories each day than needed. In children, daily excess calories can be as high as 500. Excess weight and poor diet are drivers of other health conditions including diabetes, 13 types of cancer and cardiovascular disease, and taken together cost the NHS £6.1 billion every year.

2.1.3 The independent review points to what Henry Dimbleby termed “the Junk Food Cycle” as a key driver. It argues that human diets evolved to consume natural foods, but the advent of calorie-dense often highly processed foods means that there has been a tendency to consume more without satisfying the appetite in the same way. This leads to excess calorie intake. The independent review also argued such foods were then more responsive to marketing and promotion and that industry was therefore commercially compelled to place more emphasis on promoting them.

2.1.4. Eating habits have and continue to change. Portion size in some categories has grown, and indications are that households are spending less on ingredients for home cooking and more on processed foods which require little preparation. We do not eat enough seafood - a healthy and potentially sustainable source of protein, vitamins and minerals; oily fish is also rich in long chain omega-3 fatty acids.

2.1.5. Over consumption of calories can be seen across all income groups. However, we know that obesity and dietary-related ill-health is more pronounced in the most deprived groups. Today, 69% of those in the most deprived groups are overweight or obese and many are eating insufficient fruit and vegetables, fibre and oily fish. The disparity in the prevalence of obesity between ethnic groups starts at a young age. There are also regional differences in obesity trends, which need to change.

2.1.6. The link between deprivation and dietary outcomes is not simply about the cost of healthy food. It is also about having the cooking skills, time, and equipment to prepare and cook healthier food than more convenient alternatives, which may not be as readily available to those on low incomes. This may be compounded by the stress and pressures

associated with poverty that makes it harder to prioritise health. During Covid-19, there has also been an exponential growth in the takeaway sector, with online aggregators and delivery companies providing easier access for all population demographics to typically more calorie-dense food. This has been driven by more people using takeaways.

2.1.7. Overall, choosing the healthier option is often much more challenging, with the range of healthier choices often declining the poorer you are with additional barriers such as convenience and access hindering those on lower incomes from consuming a healthier diet.

2.1.8. Some say that individual responsibility has little effect given the influences of the surrounding food environment. Some say that all that is required is education and will power. Since obesity is a complex cultural challenge, there is a shared responsibility to identify the solution, which lies in making healthier choices easier. There is an important role for individual responsibility and choice, which can result in increased demand for healthier foods. Industry also has a role to play, with its responsibility for promoting and supplying healthier foods by, for example, reformulating products to contain less sugar, salt, or calories, and supporting the Government's Eatwell Guide recommendations for a balanced diet. There is also a crucial role for government to make targeted regulatory interventions to support change. Making food healthier will require changing the food environment and for well-informed individuals to make different choices. That could mean encouraging reformulation to reduce calories, or it could mean reducing portion sizes and coupling such changes with individuals making healthier lifestyle choices.

2.1.9. The Government's voluntary sugar reduction programme set an ambition for all sectors of the food industry to voluntarily reduce sugar by 20% by 2020 in the food categories that contribute most to the intakes of children aged up to 18 years. Significant industry led progress has been made in lowering the amount of sugar in branded breakfast cereals and yogurts and in some milk-based drinks. However, progress is still needed in other food categories, reflecting that in many cases the companies who embrace the concept of positive change put themselves at a competitive disadvantage. At the other end of the spectrum, government intervention can cause unintended consequences. A drive to reduce the portion size of chocolate bars has led to an increase in the sale and promotion of "multi-packs". Successful interventions to date include the Soft Drinks Industry Levy which reduced the average sugar content of soft drinks by driving reformulation. Soft drink consumption has risen sharply in recent decades and has been a major source of excess sugar consumption. The reformulation that has resulted from this regulatory intervention has already led to significant change, reducing the total amount of sugar in the drinks within its scope by around 44%.

2.1.10. Government can set a clear direction for industry and ensure that consumers are empowered with information to make improved dietary choices. Government should also incentivise industry to reformulate and promote healthier food that is more accessible, and design and deliver policy actions that drive improvements across the food environment.

2.1.11. There is also a role for government to address health inequalities and government and industry must work together to better enable individuals to make healthier choices.



This is a major focus of the Government's levelling up agenda, and the Department for Health and Social Care's forthcoming Health Disparities White Paper will set out further measures to tackle health disparities and boost well-being in every part of the UK.

2.1.12. Nutrition and sustainability are interrelated – we should not tackle either in isolation. The measures we now set out are aimed at supporting better informed food choices with the dual objective of shifting consumers towards healthier and more sustainable choices and prompting a supply response from the food industry, where food production and consumption become healthier and more sustainable.

## **2.2. Encouraging healthier and more sustainable dietary choices**

2.2.1. The independent review highlighted that ultra-processed foods could be an important contributor to over consumption of higher calorie foods. However, to determine their exact role in driving obesity, further research is needed. A new £11 million UKRI-led initiative, the Diet & Health Open Innovation Research Club, will help address this gap. It will support new research across businesses and academics to drive improvements in understanding the relationship between food and health, how we can improve the nutritional value of the food we eat and explore what underpins food choices.

2.2.2. We will set up a programme of pilots to test place-based interventions and to improve the evidence base for healthier diets. As announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, we will invest in enabling primary care to undertake a pilot programme to improve diets – the Community Eatwell Programme. This will build on the growth of social prescribing within Primary Care Networks, as well as the existing Healthy Weight Coaches. Further details will be published in the Health Disparities White Paper.

2.2.3. Local Food Partnerships have already brought together councils and partners from the public sector, voluntary and community groups, and businesses to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality, while supporting a prosperous local food economy. We will learn from their approaches and work to understand and identify best practice in addressing food affordability and accessibility to healthy food. As part of our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy, Government will identify the areas most in need of this insight, and Defra will work with local authorities and food charities in these priority areas. This will also further be explored through the upcoming Health Disparities White Paper.

2.2.4. It is important that individuals build a better understanding of their food choices from a young age as early childhood experiences have far-reaching implications for later in life. There are already several initiatives in schools which promote and provide children with high quality, nutritious, tasty food and drink. We want to help schools take this further and spark a school food revolution. As recently announced in our Levelling Up White Paper, we will promote a 'whole school' approach to food, with governors, teachers and caterers committed and empowered to work together towards a healthier food culture. School leaders and governors will be required to publish a school food vision on their websites

and schools will have greater support in procuring high quality and value for money food, through the 'Get Help Buying for Schools' service. Government will also review the current policy and delivery method of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. The recent launch of the joint DfE and FSA pilot for local authorities to assure compliance with school food standards will help ensure progress is aligned with our ambition.

2.2.5. Food is already a topic within the curriculum, with students receiving high quality teaching on the importance of healthy eating and nutrition. Building on this, we have recently announced up to £5 million to deliver a school cooking revolution with an ambition that children leaving secondary school knows at least six basic, healthy recipes. This includes developing brand new materials for the curriculum, finding opportunities for children and young people to better understand sustainable food and its connection to nature. We will support teachers and school leadership, recognising their crucial role in teaching the value of healthy and sustainable diets and we will consider insights from Ofsted's Research review into Design and Technology to support the teaching of cooking and nutrition.

2.2.6. The pandemic highlighted the importance of school provision of healthy and nutritious food; an invaluable lifeline to many children and young families, especially those on low incomes. We have made it easier for young families to apply for and use the Healthy Start Scheme through digitisation and continue the provision of Universal Infant Free School Meals to all infants in England's state funded schools, as well as continuing the National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) for schools in disadvantaged areas. We will permanently extend entitlement of free school meals to 'No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)' families and will continue to keep free school meal eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them. We have already committed to continue funding the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme with a £600 million investment.

## 2.3. Creating a more transparent food system

2.3.1. People want better information about the food they eat, including on health, sustainability and animal welfare. Where that better information is available, the food industry responds by providing healthier, higher welfare and more sustainable food. For example, many retailers promoted free-range eggs and amended their sourcing policies following increased consumer awareness of hen welfare and the introduction of mandatory egg labelling. Similar changes have been seen in the seafood sector, where increased information and consumer demand for sustainably sourced seafood has prompted some retailers to attach responsible sourcing requirements to seafood from their suppliers.

2.3.2. To drive positive change through better information, transparency, and accountability, we are **launching a transformational Food Data Transparency Partnership**. The partnership will provide consumers with the information they need to make more sustainable, ethical, and healthier food choices and incentivise industry to produce healthier and more ethical and sustainable food.

2.3.3. Improving food system data and information is a shared challenge. The Partnership will therefore provide a framework to bring together the UK Government, Devolved Administrations and representatives from across the whole food supply chain and civil society, to at first look at the development of consistent and defined metrics to objectively measure the health, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare impacts of food. These metrics will provide the foundation upon which the Partnership's activities and any future interventions will be built, seeking to minimise burdens on businesses and policy divergence across the UK.

2.3.4. By the end of 2023, in England, we will streamline for industry all reporting requirements relating to the production and sale of food and drink and begin the implementation of mandatory reporting against some of the metrics for health and possibly sustainability and animal welfare. These will initially be targeted at large companies across retail, manufacturing, out of home, food to go and online delivery businesses, and we will consult fully on changes prior to implementation. Large companies are already required to report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and we will explore how to extend this to capture the Scope 3 emissions across the supply chain. Reporting will allow for better comparability and scrutiny across the sector, allowing government to regularly report on the impacts of the food system – the independent review made the strong case for a more transparent system being fundamental to stimulating positive change. We will also look to adopt similar reporting requirements for seafood and managing the marine environment.

2.3.5. The Partnership will also consider consumer information across the range of metrics for both retail and the out of home sectors. In England, we will ensure that food information (such as labels, online information, QR codes) is optimised and based upon a set of established overarching principles which will be defined by government. These principles will include ensuring that information is consistent, accessible, easy to understand and does not mislead. We will build on what we have learnt from existing methods of consumer information and work closely with the DAs to minimise divergence across the UK. More specifically:

- **On sustainability:** In England, we will develop a mandatory methodology that must be used by those who want to produce eco labels or make claims about the sustainability of their products. This will drive integrity in the food system by preventing 'green washing' claims whilst we work with industry to improve environmental information for consumers. Working with the sector and existing assurance schemes, we will consider the role of Earned Recognition to acknowledge environmentally sustainable farming and look at how sustainable practices can be communicated to consumers.
- **On health:** we will build upon learnings from existing methods of consumer information, such as front of pack traffic light nutrition labelling, taking into account the metrics and reporting that are developed through the Partnership.
- **On animal welfare:** By early 2023, in England, we will consult on proposals to improve and expand current mandatory labelling requirements, and to introduce equivalent measures in the foodservice sector. Building on **responses to Government's recent Call for Evidence on Food Labelling for Animal**

**Welfare**, proposals will cover domestic and imported products, considering our international trade obligations, and will help consumers identify when products meet or exceed our high UK animal welfare standards. Any changes will work in conjunction with existing assurance schemes, account for the specific circumstances of each sector, and draw upon any pre-existing standards as well as the set of standards and metrics developed in the first phase with industry. In the poultry sector, for example, there is already an agreed set of differentiated welfare standards that labelling could build on.

- **On Country of Origin:** we will explore whether existing country-of-Origin rules can be strengthened by mandating how and where origin information is displayed, for example, on the front of packs.

2.3.6. This Partnership will join up with existing work across government to promote healthier food choices, so that government can speak with one voice to industry. It will also form a basis for further measures to strengthen incentives to reformulate food, promote healthier food and turn the trend on the overconsumption of calories to tackle obesity. More detail will be considered by DHSC and will be set out in its Health Disparities White Paper.

## 2.4. Public procurement leading by example

2.4.1. Our vision is that public sector food and catering is an exemplar for wider society, delivering positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts. Public sector food should be healthier, more sustainable and provided by a diverse range of local suppliers. Locally produced food with reduced distance between farm and fork can provide societal benefits, such as creating personal connection between producers and consumers, supporting local food cultures and local economic growth, and improving traceability of food through shorter supply chains.

2.4.2 To deliver this vision, we are **consulting on public sector food and catering policy, including the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF)**. We will consider widening the scope of the policy to be mandatory across the whole public sector including schools. Within the consultation we will propose that the public sector reports on progress towards an aspiration that 50% of its food expenditure is on food produced locally or to higher environmental production standards such as organic, Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) Marque or equivalent. We will also support the sector to work with more small and local suppliers, implement new policy measures, and explore using an assurance scheme to drive continuous improvement on a local level and recognise high performing institutions. To improve accountability and inform future policy changes, we will require public organisations to report on the food they buy, serve and waste in a similar way as we will expect large companies to report on food sales under the Food Data Transparency Partnership.

## 3. The UK as part of a global food system

### 3.1. Strengthening Global Food Security

3.1.1. We will continue to work with international partners to support worldwide action to mitigate the impact of rising global food prices and any future crises on the most vulnerable countries and people. Global food prices have risen sharply in the last two years leading to a global food security crisis. Almost 1 billion people in 92 countries do not have enough food to eat and 55 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, are already in acute hunger crises, emergency, or famine conditions. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has escalated this global crisis, by causing turbulence in international agricultural commodity markets and pushing up wheat, maize, and fertiliser prices. This impacts the nutritional status of vulnerable people around the world, puts more people at risk of famine, and threatens the political and economic stability in many developing countries.

3.1.2. We know from previous food price crises that the best way to keep food prices down is to keep food trade flowing. Therefore, we are advocating for all countries, including in the WTO, to keep food trade flowing and avoid trade-restrictive measures. We are providing significant support to mitigate the impact of high food prices on the countries and people most at risk through multilateral organisations, such as the World Bank and the UN food and agriculture agencies. Through UK-funded programmes such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme and the African Food Trade and Resilience programme, we are supporting governments, regional trade organisations and companies to promote more open and predictable food trade, sustainable food production, and resilient supply chains. Around a quarter of the UK's humanitarian aid is spent on providing food and nutrition assistance each year and the UK has committed to spending £1.5 billion on nutrition outcomes by 2030.

3.1.3. We are also working to increase the sustainability of agriculture internationally to help build a resilient and secure global food system whilst supporting people, climate and nature. For example, as COP26 presidents we are taking forward the Agriculture Breakthrough to make sustainable agriculture the most attractive and widely adopted option for farmers by 2030, as well as the sustainable agriculture Policy Dialogue, which is raising international ambition to transform our agriculture and food systems.

### 3.2. Maximising the benefits of new trade agreements post-Brexit

3.2.1. International trade offers UK consumers great opportunities to buy and eat exciting new products that cannot be produced domestically. Being part of a globalised food system also contributes to our food security through a combination of strong and consistent domestic production of food as well as a diversity of supply sources through trade. We must strike a balance between supporting domestic production and the high standards we rightly set for it, and imports which improve consumer choice and can

encourage competition and innovation. Some of the changes that we have seen since the late twentieth century have been down to changing consumer trends. For example, rice consumption in the UK has increased fivefold since the early 1970s, and since we cannot grow it ourselves, it is not surprising that it has contributed to an increase in imports. This has led to the growth of British manufacturing industries, such as the milling industry which provides employment in deprived areas of the UK.

3.2.2. Brexit allows us to strike ambitious Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). By continuing to support our farmers and agri-businesses to sustainably increase production and export capability, we will support growth in the food and drink sector to take advantage of trade liberalisation under these agreements. We will access new markets and increase our global competitiveness. For example, we are seeking increased access with countries that provide substantial opportunities for UK producers, such as India, where there is high demand for our whisky, salmon, and cheese. We aim to conclude negotiations for a UK-India FTA in October 2022. Whilst increasing access, we will safeguard our most sensitive agricultural and seafood sectors during a period of significant change. We will do this by securing protection for our Geographical Indications, ensuring fair competition, and removing trade barriers in a controlled way. For example, the recent deals with Australia and New Zealand are designed to offer protection for the farming sector through and beyond the agricultural transition, so that farmers can evolve their business models and compete at home and abroad. At the same time, we will increase consumer access to safe, good quality, good value foods, and we will promote our values and approach to production on the international stage.

### **3.3. Harnessing export opportunities and supporting our agri-food industry**

3.3.1. We recognise that this is a period of major change in the UK agri-food sector both domestically, through the agricultural transition, and internationally, due to our FTA programme. Government will support farmers to adapt to those changes by taking a reciprocal, targeted and phased approach to liberalising markets, whilst retaining tariffs and other safeguards where that is necessary for the most sensitive sectors. In England, this approach is particularly crucial over the next six years while the Common Agricultural Policy is phased out and Environmental Land Management brought in. We will be mindful of the potential impact on Scotland and Wales, given the proportionately larger size of sensitive primary agriculture in their communities compared to England.

3.3.2. There are great opportunities for UK agriculture in many Asian markets including China, India, and Japan, as well as opportunities for UK dairy in Canada and the United States, and opportunities for the sheep sectors in both the US and Middle East. We have announced an export package to boost export capability, create greater opportunities for producers and manufacturers, and support food and drink small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to work towards exporting. We will deliver on the growing demand for our high-quality UK produce across the world and broaden the range and scale of exports.



3.3.3. This includes appointing 10 agri-food attachés across the world to support UK food and drink exporters to break into and flourish in key growth markets. We are also establishing a new Export Council that brings industry and government together to boost exports. We will continue to work with the Agriculture and Horticulture Board (AHDB) on opening access to these markets. To support our seafood industry, we recently dedicated £1 million of the UK Seafood Fund to boosting UK seafood exports, through buyer networking, increased presence at international expos and in-market specialists.

3.3.4. Furthermore, we are working with industry to remove unnecessary administrative burden as we continue to trade with the EU and to simplify the process for trading within Northern Ireland. This includes enhanced digitisation with an extensive e-Trade programme and a Single Trade Window data platform to reduce costs and administrative burden. The Movement Assistance Scheme will provide financial support to traders who meet the certification requirements of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

## 3.4. Maintaining our world-leading food and animal welfare standards

3.4.1. This Government was elected on a manifesto commitment that ‘in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.’ During the passage of both the Agriculture and Trade Acts, we saw how much the British public care about the standards of food on offer, no matter its origin.

3.4.2. We will always ensure that FTAs protect domestic standards in all these areas and our existing related controls on imports, including our Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regime. **We will shortly be publishing an SPS policy statement to provide more detail.** This will set out our requirement that those wishing to access the UK market must objectively demonstrate their approach delivers an equivalent level of health protection to our domestic standards. It will also describe how our SPS regime will evolve based on evidence to face the modern global challenges of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and zoonotic diseases. This will include how animals are managed to prevent AMR and disease outbreaks, alongside a holistic consideration of animal welfare and environmental protection. This world-leading approach will help the international trading system to better respond to current and future challenges.

3.4.3. We will take a balanced approach to tariff negotiations that considers the interests of consumers and existing producers. We will use the full range of levers at our disposal – including tariffs, quotas and safeguards. For example, **we will seek animal welfare linked liberalisation in our FTAs, allowing us to offer more generous liberalisation for products certified as meeting certain key animal welfare criteria specified in the agreement.** Any decision on the liberalisation of products through FTAs will also consider the impact on climate change and the environment.

3.4.4. Standards linked liberalisation is not the only means of ensuring that our standards are not compromised. For example, in the Australia FTA we excluded pig meat, chicken and eggs from tariff preferences, reflecting the importance of animal welfare to the UK and

the level of trade between Australia and the UK on these products. We will look to build on this precedent in upcoming trade agreements.

3.4.5. Trade policy and the UK's international development work provide a wider opportunity to influence and improve global standards in food production. For example, our recent FTAs with Australia and New Zealand both contain provisions supporting co-operation in the fight against antimicrobial resistance, which we will seek to include where possible in all our FTAs. They also contain standalone chapters on animal welfare and the environment. These include non-regression commitments for animal welfare, commitments to cooperate on improving standards, and commitments to work together on important environmental issues including delivery of targets set out by the Paris agreement. We are also promoting sustainable trade through World Trade Organisation (WTO) Committees and discussions.

3.4.6. Our trade policy sits alongside our international development work: to build a coalition of support for enhancing environment and animal welfare standards globally; and to support food producers in developing countries to achieve progressively higher standards.

## **3.5. Championing a nature-positive global food system**

3.5.1. The International Development Strategy, due to be published in the first half of 2022, will refer to the role of the UK in the global food system to promote global health, sustainability and mutual prosperity. We will continue to lead on promoting sustainable food supply chains and working in partnership to deliver on our international commitments.

3.5.2. Furthermore, through the Environment Act, we will implement due diligence legislation to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. We will also continue to measure the global environmental impact through our recently published indicator, including tropical deforestation risk of UK consumption of key commodities.

3.5.3. The UK is also taking action globally to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Brexit provides the opportunity to strengthen the UK's IUU fishing policy beyond the EU approach. This will be set out in the UK IUU Fishing strategy later this year

3.5.4. We will consider options to address risks of carbon leakage<sup>2</sup> within the food system. Our reporting on the environmental and health impacts of the food system will include an assessment of our global environmental impact.

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<sup>2</sup> Displacement of production and emissions due to unequal pricing/regulation across jurisdictions.



## 4. Summary of key measures and next steps

4.1. This food strategy sets out our priorities for delivery of the objectives outlined in the introduction. It is not a comprehensive summary of everything that government is doing to improve our food system, or the actions being taken by industry and other key actors. It instead articulates some of the key priorities for action within our food system; new opportunities available to us following Brexit; and opportunities to support levelling up.

4.2. 10 of the key new measures and proposals to deliver against our objectives are summarised below:

Objective 1: To deliver a prosperous agri-food and seafood sector that ensures a secure food supply in an unpredictable world, and contributes to the levelling up agenda through good quality jobs around the country

1. The continued production of healthier, high quality, tasty food and drink domestically remains of vital importance for our economy and food security. This strategy sets out our commitment to broadly maintain levels of domestic production by supporting our farmers and boosting production in key sectors, including horticulture and seafood. We will do this by taking advantage of new research and technologies and making the most of post-Brexit opportunities.
2. It is essential that there is a sufficient and qualified workforce to support every food and drink business, dispersed around the whole country. This strategy sets out how we will work with industry to support the upcoming MAC review of the Shortage Occupation List and extend the Seasonal Worker visa route to include poultry. We will also commission an independent review to tackle labour shortages in the food supply chain, considering the roles of automation, domestic employment and immigration routes.
3. Ensuring our workforce has the necessary skills to take advantage of new and emerging innovations will help drive greater efficiency and production. This strategy sets out how we will work with industry to review existing skills programmes, identify improvements, and tackle barriers that currently prevent uptake. This will also help to drive up completion of skills training, pay and productivity in all areas of the UK to support levelling up.
4. Innovation is also a key component to sustainably boost production and profitability across the supply chain. As set out in this strategy, we will develop a joint vision for agri-food innovation, identifying shared priority areas for investment and coordination. Through funding and improving our regulatory frameworks post-Brexit we will support progress on a wide range of issues, including alternative proteins and progress on gene editing. We will also develop a What Works Centre to provide farmers with evidence that supports the adoption and on-farm take up of new innovations.
5. As announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, we will introduce a suite of measures to improve school food and build a strong food curriculum, including the £5 million school cooking revolution pilot and a new pilot for local authorities to assure school compliance with school food standards. This will support every

child leaving secondary school to achieve a healthier lifestyle and paves the way for a future generation to work in our food system.

Objective 2: To deliver a low-carbon, nature-positive food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthy and sustainable diets for all.

6. Our food system must not only feed our nation today but also protect it for tomorrow. This strategy sets out how we can continue to produce food in a sustainable, nature positive way. We will use the Agriculture Act (2020), Fisheries Act (2020) and Environment Act (2021) as frameworks to incentivise farmers and food producers to adopt more sustainable practices in addition to publishing a land use framework in 2023. This will ensure we meet our net zero and biodiversity targets, and help our farmers adapt to a changing climate, whilst continuing to produce high quality produce that supports a healthier diet.
7. As set out in this strategy, our Food Data Transparency Partnership provides a unique opportunity to leverage the collective energy and enthusiasm found across the food system and drive a real transformation in health, animal welfare and environmental outcomes through our food. It will ensure we have a robust framework for tackling some of the fundamental questions for our food system, raising transparency and responsibility.
8. This strategy will create an environment that makes it easier for consumers to make better decisions about the food they purchase and consume and that align with their own priorities, including health, through improved consumer information.
9. As announced in this strategy, we will also consult on Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF). This consultation will include whether to widen the scope of GBSF mandatory organisations to cover the whole public sector including schools and introducing an aspirational target that at least 50% of food spend must be on food produced locally or certified to higher environmental production standards.

Objective 3: To deliver trade that provides export opportunities and consumer choice through imports, without compromising our standards for animal welfare or doing environmental or social harm.

10. Trade strengthens food security and enables the whole country to have access to food and drink that would be impossible or impractical to produce domestically. This strategy sets out how we will harness the benefits of new FTAs, made possible following Brexit. We will do this whilst maintaining our world-leading domestic standards, by using a range of levers within our bespoke trade agreements, our SPS policy and animal welfare linked liberalisation. We will ensure British businesses are well placed to take advantage of the growing export opportunities available to them through these deals. We will also continue to work internationally to create a more resilient, environmentally friendly and healthier global food system.

4.6. This Food Strategy will help ensure we deliver on this Government's ambition for a prosperous agri-food sector, and that healthier and more sustainable diets can be achieved by all.