



Food, Farming and Hospitality

Why the British
story matters





The role of provenance and sourcing when dining out

Food and drink matters. To your business, your customers and the farmers and growers who produce it. Whether it's grabbing a bite on the go, discussing business over lunch or celebrating important events, eating out is central to everyday life.

The NFU wants to work with the out of home market more closely, to build partnerships and enable British food and drink to be a part of your brand and your story.

Building relationships between the out of home sector and British farmers will create greater opportunities to serve delicious local food that is safe and fully traceable, providing the provenance the public increasingly appreciates. When you buy British, you are buying food that consumers trust.

The challenge of climate change and the ambitions for net zero can be an opportunity for everyone. Together we can set out a roadmap to highlight how the industry can work collaboratively to get more lower carbon British food on menus.

However, with the backdrop of record levels of inflation, coupled with the cost of living crisis, we understand the challenges out of home operators face.

The whole food supply chain needs to work collaboratively to meet the current economic, environmental and societal challenges that we are all facing.

To understand the relationship between food, farming and the out of home market, the NFU commissioned detailed research. This data provides the basis of the report and was gathered in conjunction with the CGA by NIQ.*

British food meets customer demand

British consumers have a trusted relationship with British farming, with **87%** of GB consumers wanting to support British producers.

This means that the importance of stocking "locally sourced" and "British" products can help businesses differentiate from their competition and build a trusting relationship with their customers.

Sustainability and supporting local holds a firm place in consumers' buying choices for eating at home. We are seeing this sentiment slowly enter the out of home market.

Therefore, whether its British food being seen as high quality, or its role in delivering on personal sustainability ambitions, sourcing locally provides a positive statement to customers, enabling a more trusted relationship to grow.

How 'Britishness' can add value to your brand

Research commissioned by the NFU in 2022 showed the importance of British food sourcing to people when eating out of home and how locally sourced and British can add value to your brand.

In difficult trading conditions, sourcing can be used to build a strong relationship with your customers and gain "cut through" in a competitive marketplace. Consumer feedback shows that promoting British provenance can add loyalty to brands within the market.

Our data shows:

65%
OF CONSUMERS

are more likely to visit a venue which claims its ingredients are sourced from British farmers

BOTH BRITISH AND LOCALLY SOURCED FOOD is perceived to be fresher, higher quality and more sustainable.

Nine out of 10 people think of sustainability when eating out, with **local sourcing** of ingredients the **number one** aspect of sustainability

CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

mean that products labelled as "locally sourced" should be sourced within 50 miles



YOUNGER PEOPLE

have a tighter definition of 'local' and one in five **older people** are willing to accept British as local

Additionally, sourcing locally can enable businesses to charge a premium as consumers are willing to pay extra where local provenance is stated.

58%

of GB consumers would be likely to pay more for a meal if the provenance of the main ingredient was promoted

56%

of GB consumers would be likely to pay extra for a dish on the menu where the main food item has been sourced from British farmers

Case study: The Triangle, Rob Lewis

The Triangle is an independent inn run by Rob and Philip Lewis in Rhayader, Powys, Wales. The pub serves a range of pub classics and prides itself on serving locally sourced, home-made food.

"We source beef and lamb from our own farm or from neighbouring businesses, with the rest of the produce coming from local suppliers.

"To showcase this quality, we highlight the special characteristics that are unique to the PGI Welsh beef and lamb we serve, explaining the farming practices and traditions associated with these geographical indicators to the customer. For us, it's the welfare and environmental credentials behind the product that enable our customers to be assured of the quality at the heart of our menu.

"Utilising the menu to explain our sourcing story has meant we have become synonymous with quality, fresh food that brings customers back time and time again.



For our business to operate successfully where it is, we not only have a deep connection with local farmers, we allow customers to join the journey through the storytelling of our product on our menu, and on-site through our signage.

"Signposting to where we source, alongside quality assurances, has enabled us to manage the uncertainty of the hospitality sector, with business booming post pandemic. We believe that maintaining the connection to local enables customers to connect with the rural community and the landscape they are eating in."





The value of storytelling your product

Relationships between a business and food producers can provide additional benefits, helping build trust and justify pricing.

To recoup the benefits of British sourcing to your brand, clear unambiguous storytelling can drive that key relationship between the consumer and the business.

Two in five consumers see the provision of sourcing information as vital when deciding which venues to visit. If you are doing the work to engage with British farmers, it's important to communicate it.

Consumers have indicated they need help from businesses with sourcing information when eating out, with **69%** of consumers agreeing it is 'very or somewhat important' that the sourcing of food in venues is transparent.

Customers may not have the necessary information to make those informed decisions, so clearly showcasing your sourcing decisions on menus, your website or through social media can only support this need.

Storytelling will enable you to provide greater value to your customer offering and help cement a closer relationship with your food producer.

Case study: McDonald's UK and Ireland

Harriet Wilson is Agriculture Manager for McDonald's UK & Ireland, a brand famous for its Golden Arches and iconic burgers.

"Trust in the McDonald's brand is at an all-time high, thanks to the way in which our suppliers have helped us to highlight the provenance, quality, and sustainability of our menu.

"We are proud to be one of the biggest supporters of British and Irish agriculture and recognise the importance of building strong and long-term working relationships with our farmers. They are a core part of developing a successful and resilient supply chain that has been our focus for over a decade.

"Our Farm Forward programme, launched in 2012, delivers on our commitment to continuously improve and to use the power of our supply chain for good. This is a mutual commitment that is helping to secure the future of farmers across the country. Working in partnership allows us to navigate today's challenges while also investing in relationships to support farmer resilience, raise animal welfare standards, and deliver environmental improvements.

"Customers are increasingly interested in where their food comes from and are putting greater emphasis on quality and sustainability when making decisions on how to spend their money. It is imperative, therefore, for brands like ours to keep telling the story of British and Irish farming by utilising every channel available, including via dedicated advertising campaigns, on restaurant tray liners and through our website."



Four million people visit McDonald's every day expecting quality food at great value. However, our success is only possible thanks to the commitment of the 23,000 British and Irish farmers that we rely on to source quality ingredients that our customers can trust.

Certification can provide assurance Britain is leading the way on standards in many areas

British producers consistently produce food to standards above the required minimum, whether that's through additional environmental initiatives, voluntary animal welfare measures or farm assurance schemes such as Red Tractor Farm Assurance.



Supporting recognised UK certification schemes gives assurances to both your business and customers. The industry is sensitive to the needs and wants of food and farming assurance within the out of home market. We can all support and enable the development and delivery of standards that mean your customers can choose British food with confidence.

Why does this matter to the out of home market?

- Consumers want the food they eat to have strong sustainability and welfare credentials.
- The sourcing and sustainability of meat products is particularly important for consumers.
- The farming community wants to raise awareness of the additional standards they produce to.
- For businesses to maintain trust in their supply relationships, farmers want to communicate the added value and unique standards of British production.

Additionally, Geographical Indicators (GI) can showcase the quality and provenance of a product to customers. Geographical Indicators cover food, drink, and agricultural products with a geographical connection or that are made using traditional methods and can be registered and protected as intellectual property. This protection guarantees a product's characteristics or reputation, authenticity, and origin. Examples are West Country beef and lamb, Welsh lamb and beef, English sparkling wine and Stilton cheese

What steps can operators take on behalf of farmers and growers?

- Build positive long-term relationships with farmers and growers to provide certainty and confidence for farmers and for the supply chain to work together to meet our shared goals, such as positive environmental measures.
- Tell the producer story to your customers to enable them to make informed decisions and so the work of farmers can be communicated effectively.

We believe the following steps can help.

- Increase the utilisation of menus to showcase the provenance and value of your sourcing.
- Utilise websites and social media to tell the story of British farmers and growers.
- Enhance your onsite signage to engage with your customers about your menu offering.
- Integrate servers and staff into your "farmer story" so they can be your ambassadors.

Case study: Hawksmoor

Hawksmoor is the award-winning steak restaurant co-founded by Will Beckett and Huw Gott, known for serving delicious British beef.

"Our business is based on serving the best ingredients we can find. For steak in our UK restaurants, this means working with British producers, and building relationships at farm level that give us and the farmers a clear view of what the other wants and needs to make the relationship work.

"Being close to the farmers also allows us to talk to our customers about sourcing, farming and the principles we espouse, linking their experience in the restaurant to the story and the people behind it. Whether you are on our website, looking through our social media, or in one of our restaurants, we hope it's clear how we are sourcing and why, for us, it's a priority."

"But it is not just beef that is part of our story. We work closely with farmers, processors, suppliers, fishermen, delivery companies and many more, talking about Hawksmoor, our standards and about the sense of purpose that underpins its success.

"Having these dedicated relationships allows us to run trips with our teams, so that whatever their role in the restaurants, people can be ambassadors for the food and drink we serve. It also allows Hawksmoor and its supply chain to meet high welfare and sustainability ambitions that are important to us, to our teams, and to our customers, and helps people feel proud of what we are trying to do here."

"As we work towards net zero as a business, our relationships with farmers, particularly the livestock farmers, will be a critical piece of how we all hit the targets we need to meet, and we've been really heartened by the active engagement we've seen from them in this area already."



Our sourcing strategy is a really important part of our story. It is the foundation for quality and consistency and enables us to meet our welfare and sustainability goals, alongside building a lasting and trusted relationship with our customers.

HAWKSMOOR

When consumers want to see the welfare and sustainability credentials of their food, offering British produce is an easy and simple way to create and build a trusting relationship between customers and businesses.

- **British farmers are committed to sustainable soya sourcing:** According to the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya in 2021, 66% of the UK's soya consumption is either deforestation and conversion free or covered by a sustainability standard.
- **We are championing the reduction of antibiotics on farm:** UK antibiotic sales for food-producing animals have reduced by 55% since 2014. This represents the lowest sales to date.



WE ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF HIGH WELFARE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS: British egg farmers invested £400 million to replace battery cages with higher welfare enriched colony cages.



WE MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT WE HAVE: Around 70% of a typical British beef cattle herd's diet is grass, with the remainder made up of by-products, silage and grains from crops which are not grown for the food supply chain.

- **We lead the way on food safety:** The British Lion mark on eggs means they have been laid by hens vaccinated against salmonella and have been produced to the highest standards of food safety.
- **We are a lower carbon product:** Based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and lifecycle assessments from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), greenhouse gas emissions from UK beef are about half the global average.

Why does this matter?

British farmers and growers have an ambition to be net zero by 2040. We want to work collaboratively with the out of home sector to understand how we can transition to meet our lower carbon ambitions.

The NFU believes there is more we can do to collaborate on environmental ambitions, alongside building more sustainable relationships which allow everyone to invest to transition into more environmentally friendly practices.



School of Sustainable Food and Farming

For change to happen the entire food and farming sector needs to work in a transformational way to drive research and innovation. The NFU has launched its sector resilience plans to drive conversations around how we can meet shared ambitions on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as co-founding the School for Sustainable Food and Farming located at Harper Adams University.

The school's vision is to educate, inspire and empower current and future farmers to achieve net zero within a sustainable farming and food system. It helps farmers to understand how to produce food sustainably, expanding the industry's knowledge of the environment, animal welfare, positive farming relationships, and the skills at the heart of producing nutritious, tasty, British food.

To meet our collective ambitions, it is vital for long-term agricultural sustainability that out of home food businesses work more closely with farmers and growers to tell their stories and enable customers to make informed choices when eating out.



Assad Malic, Chief Communication and Sustainability Officer, Greene King

"At Greene King we have a near term science-based target of 50% greenhouse gas emission reduction across scope 3 by 2030 and a commitment to be net zero by 2040. With food being a significant element of these emissions, we must work collaboratively with our suppliers and their suppliers to find ways to transition to a more sustainable lower carbon farming system. Consumers increasingly want to understand the provenance of food served to them and its impact on the environment, and so British farmers are uniquely placed to tap into the hospitality market, providing world class, low carbon produce to businesses here in the UK. We have a collective responsibility to work together to achieve this and to engage with British farming to reach our mutual goal of net zero by 2040."



GREENE KING
BURY ST EDMUNDS



A closer working relationship will bring rewards.

British food production is going through a transformative period, with changes to trade and agricultural policy having to be navigated by the food supply chain while it simultaneously manages the inflationary challenges.

While the domestic economy is currently under immense pressure, collaboration between the out of home sector and food producers can help provide stability, build resilience, and give a vote of confidence to our farmers and growers.

By investing in British food, you are investing in a sector which provides £127 billion to the economy and supports more than four million jobs. Additionally, you are working with producers leading the way on lowering carbon emissions and setting the standards of food production.

The NFU believes that the out of home sector can be a catalyst for opportunity within British agriculture. We hope you do too.

* The data was commissioned in 2022 with the CGA by NIQ.

The research was based on consumer surveys, consumer focus groups, operator interviews, and questions within the CGA by NIQ business leadership survey. For further details

you can contact foodbusinessunit@nfu.org.uk.

