



FARMING FOR BRITAIN'S FUTURE

THE NFU 2024
GENERAL ELECTION
MANIFESTO



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What the public think

The four policy priorities the public think would show greater respect for farmers:

- a long-term plan for food and farming;
- a more powerful grocery regulator to ensure that farmers and growers are treated fairly;
- prioritising British domestic food production in the budget; and
- ensuring that more food in our schools and hospitals comes from British farmers.

When asked about a range of industries to prioritise growing in the UK, **food and farming came second to only healthcare and pharmaceuticals.**

66%

think that the parties' plans on farming will be one of the issues that affects who they vote for at the next general election.



84%

think food production targets are either as important or more important than environmental targets for farming.

91%

think that farmers are important to ensuring supermarket shelves are stocked with food.



66%

think that a commitment to a long-term plan for food and farming will be an important factor in who they vote for at the next election.

79%

think farmers have an important role to play in tackling climate change and balancing carbon emissions.



71%

say that rural crime should be treated more seriously by the police.



89%

say farmers have an important role to play in protecting our countryside and natural environment.

86%

say farmers are very important to the future of rural communities.



75%

think the creation of a SAGE (Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies) committee for food, farming and agriculture is a good idea to help the government better plan and navigate food and farming emergencies in the UK.



66%

think the government should support farmers to improve farms' role as flood defences.



71%

say farmers don't get enough credit for keeping food on our shelves.

82%

say it would be a good idea for the government to set targets to increase British food production.



Introduction

Agriculture is crucial to all of our lives because it provides the food we need to live. And farming can help deliver on issues that matter, like food security, environmental protection and climate warming – issues that are all likely to be at the centre of the debate in the run-up to the next general election.

The importance of our food security, and its central role in national security, has been highlighted by the unprecedented series of global events we've experienced in recent years. The war in Ukraine, the Covid pandemic, and increasing periods of drought and flooding both in the UK and globally have shown how susceptible our food supply is to events in other parts of the world.

Food production and food security must be given the priority they need in this country. Politicians and those in power cannot continue to think that we can ignore our own food production capabilities and simply import the food we need from other countries. Put simply, farming cannot fail.

And we know the public agree. Survey work carried out for the NFU by More in Common in October 2023 showed that: ***84%** of people think food production targets are either as important or more important than environmental targets for farming; ***82%** say it would be a good idea for the government to set targets to increase British food production; ***71%** say farmers don't get enough credit for keeping food on our shelves.

We have some of the most forward-thinking, productive and innovative farmers and growers working across our sector who can help the country achieve its economic and environmental aims while feeding the nation.

*Farming for Britain's Future, October 2023, More in Common – 2,135 adults in England and Wales responded to an online survey for the NFU between 14 and 16 October 2023.

Farmers and growers want to produce more of the food our maritime climate enables us to excel at. We want to fulfil our ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, while reducing our impact on the environment and increasing the production of green energy sources. We want to continue to be at the heart of our rural communities by providing jobs and opportunities. And we want the food, flowers, fibre and fuel we produce to showcase the best of British on a global stage.

But we can only achieve these shared aims and ambitions if government works with us. Resilient, sustainable food producing businesses are vital for the future of the country. The people running them need the security and confidence to be able to plan for the future and grow their businesses. They also need fairness, not just across the supply chain but in the policies and regulations government puts in place for the people who produce the food we eat at home and abroad.

Farmers and growers need action from the next government, not just warm words. Investing in domestic food production means we can increase our productivity, create more jobs and deliver much more for the economy and for the environment. In other words, working with us will enable us to continue farming for Britain's future.

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SCAN ME

Farming for Britain's food



British food and farming cannot be taken for granted. British farmers and growers have so much to offer to the nation, including providing high quality, affordable, climate friendly food. In an increasingly volatile world, food production is vital to our nation's health, wellbeing and security. Put simply, farming cannot fail.

Food is central to all our lives. For farmers and growers across the country, it's their passion and the reason they work every day, in all weathers, to ensure we can all enjoy healthy, nutritious, climate-friendly food produced to world-leading environmental and animal welfare standards.

Food production is critical to the security of the country and the health and wellbeing of the population. Farmers and growers want to, and can, produce more of the food that our climate and landscape are particularly suited to. But government needs to work with us so we can maximise our potential. It's a win-win for everyone – the public get more of the British

food they know and love; farmers and growers have profitable, sustainable businesses built for the long-term and can continue to be the custodians of our countryside; the government has a safe and secure supply of the food we can produce in an increasingly volatile and uncertain world.

Food security is a crucial part of our national infrastructure, as former MI5 head Baroness Manningham-Buller made clear when she gave the 2022 Henry Plumb Lecture. Ensuring our long-term food security is vital, and to do this we need government to look beyond immediate indicators like the state of our supermarkets' shelves and regularly assess the short, medium and long-

term health of the entire food sector. This will allow emerging trends to be spotted early on and steps to be taken to deal with potential issues before they become a significant problem.

Fairness in the supply chain is a vital part of this. Farmers and growers cannot be expected to continue shouldering a disproportionate amount of the cost risk while the amount they receive for the food they produce is continually squeezed. The Groceries Code Adjudicator plays a pivotal role in holding retailers to account and allowing farmers and growers to highlight breaches of the Groceries Supply Code of Practice without fear of repercussion. Its role should be expanded.

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Clear commitment to a budget that underpins sustainable domestic food production, delivers for the environment and supports all land tenures.

Establish a new food security index and target, including a statutory duty to monitor and report on domestic food production levels each year and produce an enhanced policy-focused government food security report annually that assesses the short, medium and long-term viability of the food sector.

Ensure all new policies and regulations that impact agricultural and horticultural businesses undergo a food security impact assessment.

Image courtesy of Delaval

At the moment, we produce around 60% of the food we eat. The National Food Strategy suggests an ambition to grow UK food production – and we can do it while maintaining and enhancing our iconic countryside. The next government can help create the right environment for this by committing to making sure more British food is used across the public sector. Promoting and driving local, seasonal and fresh food purchasing, by serving more local British food in our hospitals and our schools, would be a huge vote of support for British food and farming.

Joined-up government thinking is also crucial to ensuring farmers and growers can produce food to the best of their ability and are not undermined by decisions made in isolation without taking into account the bigger picture. That's why we need the next government to commit to ensuring that any new regulations and policies it introduces are assessed to make sure they don't make food production more difficult or leave farmers and growers at a competitive disadvantage.

British food is world leading. By working together we can ensure it remains the envy of the world and our farmers and growers have a resilient, profitable and sustainable future.

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A smooth and seamless transition to new environmental schemes that are open to all farmers and growers, less bureaucratic and ensure profitable long-term food-producing businesses.

Identify opportunities to increase our market share of foods we can produce sustainably, including a commitment to source 50% of food into the public sector from British farms.

Hold an annual food summit at No10 to ensure food security remains high on the political agenda.

Establish minimum standards to promote a fair and functioning supply chain and provide arbitration or oversight to uphold them, as well as increasing the powers and resource of the Groceries Code Adjudicator.

Farming for Britain's environment



Our farmers and growers have shaped and maintained our iconic countryside for generations. Our natural world is of vital importance to us all and farmers and growers are at the forefront of ensuring nature thrives alongside sustainable, climate-friendly farm businesses. Our natural resources are precious and farmers are continually working to protect them while producing our food.

Farmers and growers are the custodians of our iconic countryside, managing around 70% of England's land and carrying out a huge amount of work to protect and enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife, benefit soil and water, remove carbon from the atmosphere, and allow people to enjoy the great outdoors.

Agriculture is uniquely placed to be part of the solution to climate change as both an emissions source and a sink. To support farmers and growers on their journey to net zero, we need government to match its ambitions with policies that support farmers and growers to increase their efficient use of resources, and provide support to understand their emission sources through GHG audits and take further actions to decarbonise their businesses.

Research and innovation for adaptation is vital to understand the impact of climate change on UK agriculture and enable a range of technologies, tools, practices, and measures to be developed based on robust science, and applied commercially on farm.

Many British farmers want to measure their own farm greenhouse gas (GHG) footprints, but confusion arises through the sheer number of carbon calculators and the divergence of results each can give for the same farm. Standardising carbon calculators would be a big step forward in helping farmers know their starting point on the journey to net zero and supporting them on that journey.

Alongside this, farm businesses are ideally placed to play an increasing role in

renewable energy production through the growth of energy crops and the production of power through anaerobic digestion, solar panels and on-farm wind power.

As well as increasing energy resilience in the sector, this would also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and boost the resilience and sustainability of businesses. But renewable distribution and construction impacts must be addressed if farm businesses are to play their role in this, with both the provision of the necessary infrastructure to rural areas and the cost of access holding businesses back.

Water and soil are two of our most vital natural resources for both food



NFU ASKS



Boost a range of incentives to reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions, by driving productivity, improving energy efficiency, and reducing the impact of inputs like feed, fertiliser and fuel, while producing more climate-friendly food and increasing green energy use.

Access to water for livestock and crop production in times of shortages to be guaranteed, reflecting water's vital role in food production and food security.

Plan for, and reward farmers fairly for their role in, mitigating flood risk and protecting adjacent towns and cities, and commit to the proactive management of our watercourses.



production and for our wildlife, and farmers and growers work constantly to maintain and enhance the quality of both. Well managed soils deliver many benefits, including storage of carbon, water regulation and resilience to climate change. It is crucial farmers and growers are rewarded properly for the work they do to maintain and enhance soil health.

Access to a clean, reliable source of water is crucial for all farming and growing businesses. Policies that make it easier for farmers and growers to collect and store surplus water on farm, and ensure food production has a secure and fair share of water all year round, will help build business resilience and improve food security. The work farmers do in helping manage flood risk must also be planned and fairly rewarded, as must the constant work to reduce agriculture's impact on water quality.

Good water quality in our nation's rivers is of paramount importance to everyone. Farming has already made significant progress, with a 75% reduction in serious pollution incidents year-on-year compared to 2000, and farmers will continue to adapt and make improvements on their farms. It is vital that future farming schemes enable farmers to invest in new technology and infrastructure to tackle potential pollution issues.

There is also a growing body of research showing that people gain both physical and mental health, and a wider sense of wellbeing, from being close to nature through active pursuits, like walking, or from looking out across attractive green spaces from homes, workplaces and while travelling. Providing access to the countryside also allows farmers to talk to people about where their food comes from and helps them make informed and healthy choices about the food they buy.



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Support a growing agricultural contribution to renewable energy generation and faster, affordable access to rural electricity grid connections.

Reward for farmers for maintaining, protecting and enhancing our natural environment so everyone can experience the mental health benefits of access to our beautiful countryside.

The development of environmental markets which work alongside domestic food, energy and fibre production, have clear rules and standards to allow farmers and buyers to take part with confidence, are accessible across a range of farm sizes and business structures, and fairly reward farmers for the delivery of environmental goods.

Farming for Britain's communities

Food and farming businesses are crucial to thriving rural communities, providing jobs and supporting other rural businesses. But often, rural communities seem to be almost an afterthought when it comes to policy and regulation. We need coherent policies that enable rural areas to make a full contribution to the nation's economic and social health and wellbeing.

Thriving farming and growing businesses are at the heart of many rural communities, providing local food, flowers, fibre and fuel, supporting local supply chains, providing jobs and enabling people to live and work in the countryside and use local services.

But too often the planning system acts to make the rural economy less sustainable – preventing farm modernisation, diversification and home building for farm workers. In some cases, blanket environmental requirements mean that development is refused: a perverse outcome when development would make a farm business more sustainable, reduce its environmental footprint, create jobs, and promote green growth across the sector.

A sympathetic and symbiotic relationship is crucial. If farm businesses are allowed to build the right buildings, and do it in a way that is sympathetic to the local environment, they can reduce the impacts of production and help even more to achieve our collective goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Newer glasshouses could help us to produce more of our own fruit and veg, boosting the nation's food security and helping people to eat a healthy, balanced diet.

The NFU has consistently advocated for changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to better reflect a planning system that works for farming, with the inclusion of a weighted argument to support farming in the system.

We need a stable regulatory environment that manages risk while providing suitable incentives and sufficient freedom for farmers and growers to invest in their businesses. By creating the right policy environment, we can make the UK the go-to place for investment in agriculture and food production and a natural home for food processing companies, creating more employment opportunities and further boosting our rural communities and economies.

More also needs to be done to mitigate the huge impact the construction of major infrastructure projects has on farm businesses. Currently, major projects like HS2, electricity powerlines and underground cables can take land and rights by compulsory purchase.

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A minimum five-year rolling seasonal worker scheme, with suitable length visas, no wage differential from the National Living Wage or unrealistic cap on worker numbers, and implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review into Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain.

Responsible management of public access to the countryside so it can be enjoyed by everyone, while recognising that much of it is an active working environment.

Where major infrastructure projects have the potential to disrupt and damage farmland and farm businesses, ensure steps are taken so farms can keep operating profitably and are properly and promptly compensated for any land taken and damage caused.

Make changes to the planning system to ensure permitted development for infrastructure including glasshouses, reservoirs and slurry stores for the purposes of growing and processing fruit, vegetables, crops and livestock.

FARMING FOR BRITAIN'S FUTURE

Farmers need collaborative negotiations. For example, better located bridges, crossings and fences could all help to reduce the impact on the businesses concerned so that viable food producing businesses are not forced to close.

Poor broadband and mobile connectivity has a huge impact on rural areas. Reliable coverage and connections will benefit farm businesses, food production, and the wider rural economy. Increasing the potential of people being able to run other successful businesses in rural areas will attract more people to live and work there. A high standard of rural connectivity is essential to take full advantage of new technologies and help build resilience and sustainability into businesses. Poor digital connectivity makes farmers and growers wary of making capital investment, which can hinder their business development and have negative knock-on impacts for others in the local supply chain and the wider rural economy.

Rural businesses also need to be able to attract and retain the workforce they need. Ensuring rural areas receive a fair deal when it comes to things like public transport, and access to vital amenities and services like medical provision, will help open up rural areas for business with all the attendant social and economic benefits that will bring.

Rural crime must also be treated as a priority issue. Farms, and wider rural communities, have increasingly become targets for criminals and this has left people living in the countryside feeling more vulnerable. Crimes like hare coursing, fly-tipping on farmland, dog attacks on livestock, and theft of large and small machinery have significant knock-on effects on businesses that often feel isolated and forgotten.

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A consistent and coordinated response to rural crime across government and police forces, including fair funding for rural policing, a dedicated rural crime team in every police force in the country and the formation of a cross-departmental rural crime task force to address the failures in dealing with rural crime.

More funding for rural mental health, with Treasury, Department for Health and Social Care, Defra and NHS England to review current emergency funding mechanisms, establish a dedicated rural mental health funding stream, and include rural mental health on the curriculum of agricultural colleges.

Implement the recommendations of the Rock Review into agricultural tenancies, to support the long-term resilience of a tenanted sector delivering on food production and environmental goals.

Farming for a global Britain



British food and farming can be a flagship globally for all that is great about Great Britain. Our reputation for excellent food, produced to world-leading standards, is second to none and demand for it is growing. We need government to recognise this and work with us to maximise British food and drink's potential in new and existing markets, at home and abroad.

British food and drink has a reputation for excellence and is in demand across the globe. People in more than 200 countries demand and enjoy our high quality, traceable, climate-friendly produce. It is a great success story, with the agri-food sector contributing more than £127 billion (GVA) to the economy and supporting more than four million jobs.

In April 2022, the NFU launched an ambitious 10-point strategy aiming to grow the UK's food, drink and agricultural exports by 30% by 2030, bringing the total value of UK agri-food exports to over £30 billion. A number of the points in the plan have been addressed – the establishment of a Food and Drink Export Council, which will work in partnership with the industry to promote exports;

a further five new agri-food attachés based in the UK's overseas embassies, bringing the total number to 16.

At the Farm to Fork Summit at Downing Street in May 2023, the Prime Minister also announced additional funding of £2 million to strengthen our exporters' presence at trade shows and a further £1 million earmarked especially for dairy exports. The additional funding for dairy exports is particularly welcomed, especially as the dairy industry is proactively organising itself through an industry-led Dairy Export Task Force co-ordinated by the NFU.

While this is good progress, there is much more that needs to be done. British farmers and growers want to

be the suppliers of choice to shoppers nationally and across the world. With the right export policy support from government, we can achieve this aim and help food security on a national and global level.

Maximising the opportunities to promote our food and drink on the global stage is also crucial if we are to take full advantage of the opportunities of new trade agreements. Ireland's Bord Bia (Irish Food Board) has blazed a trail with its Origin Green sustainability programme, the only one in the world which operates at a national level and sees farmers and primary producers, processors and retailers working together and leading the way to create a better future for all involved.

NFU ASKS



Publish an annual Free Trade Agreement (FTA) assessment to quantify the cumulative impact of FTAs on trade balance, sourcing, standards and domestic food production, adapting domestic agricultural policy as a result.

Begin a formal process of developing and establishing core production standards that apply to agri-food imports, and a restatement of government commitments to retain full sovereignty over our food and farming standards in future FTA negotiations.

A cross-government, Treasury-funded plan to deal with issues identified on the government risk register that threaten food production capability, such as African Swine Fever and plant pests.



This kind of collaborative approach will help us to showcase our food around the world, maintain and enhance our global competitiveness, help the growth, sustainability and resilience of our food producers and the businesses they supply, and enable us to achieve the ambitions we share for Britain as a food-producing nation.

Establishing a set of core production standards for all food consumed in the UK is essential if our farmers and growers are not to be disadvantaged as the government develops more new free trade agreements following Brexit. These standards would ensure our farmers and growers remain at the forefront of sustainable, climate-friendly farming and the supplier of choice to consumers at home and abroad, as well as providing a safeguard as our markets are opened up to imports from countries whose standards may differ from our own.

Innovation is also crucial to ensuring our position as a world leader in the production of climate-friendly food. Innovative technologies like gene editing offer huge opportunities for farmers and growers and they need

to be accessible on farm as soon as possible. The use of science and evidence in policy decisions is also central to our ambitions to be recognised as a leader on the global stage.

A Scientific Advisory Group, similar in basic remit to SAGE (the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies), would play a vital role in ensuring the best science and evidence is used when making decisions around food production, providing independent scientific advice using expert knowledge and insight around key decisions and issues.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR POLICY ASKS



Enhance the role of AHDB with government matching levy payer funding for export promotion (presently around £8 million per year) to open and leverage new markets around the world.

Set out plans to invest in agricultural technology and innovation centres that bring benefits to the UK by, for example, taking the opportunity created by the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023 for UK farming.

Creation of a Scientific Advisory Group for agriculture, similar in basic remit to SAGE (the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies).

Funding farming's future: England's agricultural budget

The next government must look afresh at the agricultural budget it inherits. Challenges, such as climate change, and statutory commitments, such as the Environmental Improvement Plan, need to be matched by a renewed commitment to ensure the nation's food security and help farming boost domestic production, as set out in the National Food Strategy.

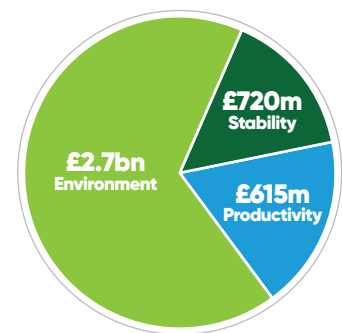
With the current spending guaranteed only for the lifetime of the current parliament, a new budget commitment will be required for the period 2025 to 2030. A balanced agricultural budget for the next parliament should be structured around the NFU's three longstanding agricultural policy cornerstones of environment, productivity and stability.

Investment in productivity and stability will ensure a competitive and resilient agricultural sector, while investment in environmental delivery also contributes to the resilience of our food systems, our environmental ambitions and a more sustainable economy.

The NFU commissioned The Andersons Centre to model the public funding required to deliver the government's ambitions for agriculture in England over the 2025 to 2030 period, structured around our three agricultural policy cornerstones.

The research indicates that an annual agricultural budget for England of around **£4 billion** would support the delivery of a balanced agricultural policy which underpins global competitiveness - around **£2.7 billion** to meet the government's environmental goals, **£615 million** for driving productivity and **£720 million** to support the economic stability of agricultural businesses.

While the modelled budget does not capture every spending requirement, due to the interactions of funding need with policy design which are difficult to fully account for, it does provide a strong indication of the level of budget required to deliver a globally competitive, productive, resilient, innovative and sustainable agricultural sector that would drive significant environmental improvements at unprecedented scale.



DIVISION OF FUNDING

Productivity



Environment

Stability

Delivering for the environment:

This budget for England would support the delivery of the environmental goals outlined in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and those proposed by the Climate Change Committee.

The budget would contribute:

- £1.1bn towards the costs of delivering the thriving plants and wildlife goal, which includes habitat creation and restoration, as well as species-friendly land management and supporting threatened species;
- £357m towards the mitigating and adapting to climate change goal, including woodland creation and maintenance, as well as peatland restoration and maintenance, an increase in bioenergy crops and agroforestry growth.

Many of the outcomes generated from funding these goals will also deliver in part on the remaining goals, where the budget would contribute an additional:

- £342m for the using resources from nature sustainably goal with a focus on sustainable soil management;
- £314m for the clean air goal with a focus on reducing ammonia emissions through low input grass and nutrient management;
- £169m for the managing exposure to chemicals goal, focusing on minimising the risks and impacts of pesticides through integrated pest management (IPM) practices;

- £36m for the clean and plentiful water goal, with a focus on reducing nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution through additional buffer strips;
- £23m for the enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment goal, supporting Farming in Protected Landscapes; and
- £15m for the reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards goal with a focus on additional long-term nature-based solutions to flooding.

This covers the costs expected to be incurred by farmers delivering the multiple environmental outcomes and, in addition, the £2.7bn includes an incentive payment to farmers to encourage the significant increase in uptake of environmental schemes required, and to recognise the unique risks and challenges of engaging in new longer-term environmental schemes.

Including an incentive payment also allows us to factor in the value of multiple environmental outcomes that farmers are expected to deliver to meet the government's, and our, environmental ambitions. This will drive high quality and resilient outcomes at scale.

The incentive payment required in practice may vary depending on the design of environmental schemes, including scheme accessibility, length of commitment, perceived compliance risk and compatibility with farming systems. However, the modelled payment serves as a broad indication of what is needed to drive unprecedented levels of uptake in government environmental scheme delivery.

As with the productivity cornerstone, it is recognised that additional targeted support for the horticulture and poultry sectors will be required, given their unique production systems and capacity to deliver for the environment.



Driving productivity and competitiveness:

To meet the government's food security, environmental and economic targets, long-term public investment in productivity measures is crucial to drive confidence as well as develop and mobilise the technical solutions that will underpin global competitiveness in the agricultural sector.

Competitor nations invest significantly in innovation and productivity, so to remain competitive within global markets equivalent investment must be provided at home. If the next government is to promote a rapid transformation of England's agricultural sector, similar levels of investment to those found in other G7 countries, trade competitors and European Union states is a prerequisite.

Public sector support can help mobilise a joined-up research and development, knowledge exchange and investment strategy which would help to deliver and scale-up productivity gains in the relatively short timescales required to meet the environmental and economic ambitions.

There has been significant uptake of existing productivity grants, which enable investment in equipment, buildings, technology, advice, diversification and cooperation. All of this leads to an increase in productivity, boosts environmental sustainability, and allows for better management of

on-farm resources and improved animal health and welfare.

The budget for productivity would align productivity spending with comparable agricultural economies from around the world, including the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, Germany, France, Denmark and the Netherlands, including many where increases in agricultural productivity have consistently exceeded what has happened here.

The budget would channel:

- £185m into investment activities which deliver both economic and sustainability benefits - these can help with the continuing support covered in the current productivity elements of the Farming Investment Fund, such as Productivity, Slurry, and Animal Health and Welfare support under the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, and larger grants for livestock housing for Health and Welfare, as well as the Improving Farm Productivity, Adding Value and Water Management grants.
- £99m to targeted capital environmental and animal health and welfare investments;
- £106m to support the uptake of on-farm services which accelerate the adoption of best practice;

- £28m to targeted research and development funding on-farm;
- £141m for diversification and co-operation activities; and
- £56m for broader structural support.

The NFU is conscious that, given the specific and volatile operating conditions of sectors such as horticulture and poultry, where reliance on key inputs such as energy and labour can lead to unique challenges, further targeted funding will be required to support cooperation as well as investment in automation and efficiencies. This will help them respond to labour challenges and drive sustainability in the sectors.

Similarly, in order to deliver against the ambitious environmental targets outlined in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), additional funding for key investments such as slurry infrastructure may also be required over time.



Underpinning stability:

Under current arrangements, in 2024 the sector will receive in the region of £720m of stability funding (through delinked direct payments), a reduction of around £1.1bn compared to the original BPS figure in 2020.

The Andersons Centre research showed that all nine of the countries we were benchmarked against provided some degree of stability support to their agricultural sectors. The £720m proposed is lower than relative support delivered in the USA, Canada, France, Germany and Denmark, but higher than in Australia and New Zealand.

The next government should retain a similar level of stability funding, with any reductions viewed as significantly undermining the resilience of a sector which is already facing significant economic challenges.

Investing in the economic stability of the agricultural sector benefits everyone. Stabilising farming incomes allows farm businesses to look beyond short-term market and cashflow pressures and invest for the long-term in productivity and environmental delivery – activities which, without stability funding, would require a higher intervention rate to secure participation. This ultimately provides the foundation for a resilient, competitive and sustainable domestic agricultural sector which delivers on food security and for the environment.

This stability support has multiple objectives, including providing economic resilience to domestic food production and, in turn, the rural economy, as well as mobilising the delivery of positive social benefits from the countryside.

The environmental scheme incentive payment will offer a degree of stable income support which will be limited to those farmers who are able to sufficiently engage in these schemes. Environmental delivery on key outcomes, such as water and biodiversity, is often location-based and therefore offers varying degrees of opportunity for farmers, depending on where they farm and their farming system.

The stability payment would offer targeted support to those farmers who cannot use other diversified income streams, such as through environmental schemes, to build the economic stability of their businesses.



Agri-food sector's contribution to the UK economy (GVA) in 2021 was

£127 BILLION



Number of people working on UK agricultural holdings in 2022 was

471,000

69%

of the UK's land area is farmed.



Agri-food sector jobs in 2022 were just under

4.2 MILLION

Number of businesses in the UK registered as farm businesses in 2022 was

142,500



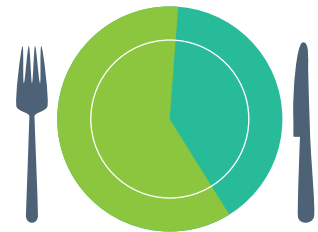
UK food and drink exports in 2022 were



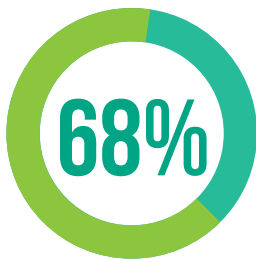
£24.8 BILLION

UK food self sufficiency is currently (2022) at

60%



Percentage of farm businesses that had some form of diversification in 2021/22 was



Amount UK shoppers spent on food and drink products in 2022 was

£281 BILLION

Farmers produce renewable energy that helps to power an average of

10 MILLION UK HOMES



Agriculture in the UK 2022 (Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government, Daera NI)

FARMING FOR BRITAIN'S FUTURE

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