

The Food and Drink Sector Council proposes collaborative action for the National Food Strategy

The Food and Drink Sector Council (FDSC), the partnership between the UK Government and the farm-to-fork food and drink industry to improve the productivity and sustainability of the food system, has published its latest [report](#) *'Feeding the Future: Working together to build the National Food Strategy'*.

The collaborative report sets out the food and drink industry's recommendations for the UK Government's National Food Strategy, due for publication in early 2022. It also shares the Council's vision, ambition and solutions for the future food system.

Our food system has been built over the last 75 years to provide British shoppers with an extraordinary range of safe, affordable, convenient, great tasting food and drink, from Britain and around the world. Throughout that time the food industry, from farm to fork, has played an essential role in meeting the changing needs of consumers, and solving the challenges of a complex, international supply system. There is no doubt that British food and drink is a great success story.

But it is also clear that the food system must change. It needs to provide more sustainable and healthier food, increase productivity and raise skills, and become more resilient to system shocks. The Covid pandemic, coinciding with the UK's withdrawal from the EU, has demonstrated both the strength of our food system and its fragility. It is vital that industry and UK Government work together to address the immediate problems in the food supply chain, but also accelerate the transition to a more productive and sustainable food system for the future.

This report addresses the key challenges of increasing productivity, raising skills, investing in innovation and technology, improving sustainability, and enabling healthier diets. The report calls for a strong partnership between industry and the UK government, and an ambitious, joined up food strategy across Whitehall departments and aligned with the Devolved Administrations.

The National Food Strategy provides a unique opportunity for industry and government to work together to accelerate the transition to the food system of the future.

Key recommendations from the report include:

- UK Government to work in partnership with the sector to help deliver short-term economic recovery and long-term sustainable growth
- An industry skills campaign that champions 'Great British' Food and Drink careers
- Replace the current Apprenticeship Levy with a comprehensive skills levy, support the take up of T-Levels through industry placements and a greater focus on STEM subjects and food in the education system.
- Double the industry's R&D spend and support SMEs to access innovation expertise, unlock funding and de-risk investments through demonstrator hubs.
- Maintaining strong support for high standards of food production in the UK and the integrity of raw material inputs.
- Create a 'Team UK' approach to trade priorities and promotion across Whitehall and the devolved nations.
- Achieve sectoral emissions reductions targets for 2030 to indicate the pathway to net zero in 2040
- A ten-year government strategy encompassing obesity and balanced diets focusing of changing the food culture in the UK

Stefano Agostini, CEO of Nestlé UK and Ireland and Co-Chair of the FDSC Food Strategy Working Group

“I am delighted to be able to present the Food and Drink Sector Council’s latest report which really focuses on what we are striving to achieve as a food and drink industry by 2030. Industry is well aware of its responsibilities, and it must engage the public in the journey to a sustainable and healthier food system, but we cannot do it alone. Our external stakeholders, as well as the Government, will play a pivotal role in helping us achieve our ambitions set out in this report. In any National Food Strategy, the food industry must be the solution, and not the problem, for the strategy to succeed. The report outlines exactly how industry intends to do that and is a valuable contribution to the National Food Strategy debate.”

Stuart Roberts, Deputy President of NFU and Co-Chair of the FDSC Food Strategy Working Group

“The food and drink industry is extremely versatile but what binds the industry together is the millions of people who work in our industry and the passion we have for our work – producing the food and drink which is at the heart of the plates of tens of millions of people every day. At the root of it, food and drink are personal, and it is why we have set out this visionary report to further enhance and value our great industry.”

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